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Investigating Key Factors in the Educational Success of Children in Public Care using a Risk and Resilience Framework

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**A thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of the Continuing Professional Development
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ABSTRACT

Why young people in care do so badly in school has been researched most recently by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 2003) and difficulties within the care system, education and the young people themselves have been highlighted. Jackson and Martin (1998) linked the field of resilience with young people in care and drew upon the experiences of successful care leavers to highlight the strengths that they had developed to cope and to succeed despite early disadvantage.

The research outlined within this thesis draws upon their work, looking for risk and protective factors within the lives of young people in care within a shire authority in England. The research consists of three studies. Study 1 pilots parallel questionnaires about young people, Study 2 involves interviewing young people and analysing transcripts qualitatively to identify themes and Study 3 analyses quantitative data from the questionnaires and interview transcripts (from Study 2).

In line with the work of Jackson and Martin (1998), results indicated that all of the young people had similar numbers of risk and protective factors in their lives. Less of the 'successful group' had experienced adequate parental care within the pre-care environment although they were found to be more likely to be engaged in other activities in school. There was a trend for the successful young people to have more internal loci of control. 'Coherence' was identified as a robust theme – the importance of young people knowing and understanding their own life story. The young people described their school experiences and support for learning within their care environments as positive. Issues about peer attitudes to care, bullying and friendships were also explored.

Finally the research was viewed within the context of "Every Child Matters" (2003) in terms of implications for future research and for practice. Possible roles for EPs are explored. Difficulties encountered are discussed in relation to the construct of resilience and the research design of the studies.

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Finally to the social workers, teachers, to Charlie Reston and to the young people themselves who took part. For their honesty and openness and willingness to tell yet another person their stories.

From “A good friend is best” by Kellie, aged 23

*“You can always count on yourself or your best friend,
Who’ll help you through the good times and make the bad ones end.*

*When your heart’s in your hand and your sock’s in your mouth,
Keep your head held high and your feet pointing south.*

*It’s the right thing to do, pick the phone up and talk,
If you do it right now, then we can begin to walk.”*

[Taking Care, BBC Books, 2004]

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CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 Introduction

Young people in public care are undoubtedly one of the most vulnerable groups in our society, having lost, in some form or another, the most important thing to most of us, our family. They are young people who may have been removed from their families because of risks to their own safety (through neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse), because their parents may not have been well enough to look after them or they may have been abandoned by their parents. The group includes young people in remand settings, secure settings and can include some young people who are in residential schools. The outcomes for young people in care underline this vulnerability with an increased number represented in the statistics for unemployment, homelessness, destitution, teenage pregnancies, mental health problems and for being in prison compared to their peer group (Cheung & Heath, 1994; Jackson & Martin, 1998; McParlin, 1996; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003).

The Department of Health reported that in England there were 59, 700 children looked after in March 2002, an increase of 1% on the previous year and a 22% increase on the year 1993-1994. Of these children, 66% were looked after in foster placements and 13% in children's homes and residential schools. Fifteen percent had experienced 3 or more care placements during the year.

In legislation, "Looked After Children (or children in public care) are children who are Accommodated or in care to the Local Authority" (Children Act, 1989).

'Accommodation' is a voluntary agreement where parents can resume care of their child without notice (e.g., where parents are ill, missing or unable to care for the child or as part of a child protection plan negotiated with a family). *'In care'* is where a court has made a child the subject of a care order [s.33 (3)] so that the Local Authority has Parental Responsibility.

Parental Responsibility is defined as all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and her/his property [s.3 (1)]. Ordinarily, the birth mother has parental responsibility and the birth father, where they are married to the child's mother. Otherwise the father needs to apply for Parental Responsibility through a court of law. Similarly, others can attain Parental Responsibility, for example through gaining a residence or adoption order. Where children are the subject of a care order, social services share parental responsibility with the birth parents. Local Authorities need to consider carefully what this means and how they meet the duties and responsibilities that they have in relation to a child for whom they share Parental Responsibility with others.

Smith (1994) emphasises Parliament's intention that the Children Act (1989) should have encouraged and facilitated **both** parents being actively involved in the care and education of their children, a principle which should extend to Local Authorities who take on parental responsibilities. The Children Bill (March 2004) lays a duty on Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children, (inserted into section 22 of the Children Act, 1989, c.41). It is clear that Local Authorities have a duty to promote the *education* of children in public care, as well as other aspects of their welfare which have more traditionally been the focus of service delivery for these young people, for example, their care.

Research has highlighted that in practice young people in care do not enjoy the support and focus on their educational attainments which Utting (1997) intended. Research has shown that the educational achievements of these young people are well below those of their peers (Biehal, Clayden, Stein & Wade 1995; Jackson, 1994) and this can significantly affect their future life chances (Cheung & Heath, 1994; McParlin, 1996).

1.1.1 'Disappointing' outcomes

Jackson and Martin (1998) reviewed the literature about young people who had left care and found that 75% had no qualifications at all. Care-leavers were consistently "many times more likely than their peers to become pregnant in adolescence, to be homeless, to engage in health-threatening behaviour and to

suffer from eating disorders and mental health problems" (p.570). Cheung and Heath (1994) highlighted the lack of further education and employment for young people leaving care as well as the number of young people offending and in prison. McParlin's work (1996) found that 80% of care leavers in his study were unemployed and destitute within eighteen months of leaving care.

The Department of Health (2003) provided outcome indicators for looked after children who had been in care continuously for a period of at least twelve months as of September 2002. Of the young people in care in the United Kingdom, 53% achieved at least one General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) compared with 95% of their peer group. Forty-two percent did not sit such an exam. Only 8% achieved at least 5 GCSE's grades A-C compared to 50% of children and at the end of year 11, only 56% remained in full-time education compared to 72% of all school-leavers. After leaving school, 24% were unemployed in the September compared to 6% of all school leavers.

Meltzer, Corbin, Gatward, Goodman and Ford (2003) carried out a survey of 2,500 children and young people in care in England in 2002. The primary purpose of the survey was to gather evidence about prevalence rates of three main categories of mental disorder: Conduct disorder, hyperactivity and emotional disorders. The survey also collected evidence about social impairment for the young people and about their use of support services. The survey included completion of forms by social workers, interviews with young people (where appropriate by age), interviews with carers and questionnaires completed by teachers in schools. Information was finally collected on 1,039 children aged between 5 and 17 years. Of all of the young people surveyed, 45% were assessed as having a mental disorder, including 37% being diagnosed with a clinically significant conduct disorder (compared to 5% of children surveyed in 1999 living in private households; Meltzer, Gatward, Goodman & Ford, 2000). Of the 5 – 15 year olds, 12% had emotional disorders compared to 5% of those in private households, 38% had conduct disorders compared to 6% in private households and 9% were assessed with hyperkinetic disorders compared to 2% in private households. In terms of their placements, two thirds of young people in residential homes were assessed as having a mental disorder, half of those living independently (16 – 17 year olds) and two fifths of those in foster care or living

with their natural parents. Children in residential care were far more likely to have conduct disorders (56% compared to 33% and 28%). These statistics raise concerns about the mental health of young people in care.

The teacher questionnaires completed within Meltzer et al's (2003) study provided more recent information about the attainment and school experiences of the children in care. Teachers were asked to rate each child in terms of whether they were 'above average', 'average', 'had some difficulty' or 'experienced marked difficulty' with reading, mathematics and spelling. Sixty per cent of the children in care surveyed had at least some degree of difficulty with one or more of these skills. Boys seemed to have more difficulties than girls. More difficulties were rated for the children in residential care than for the other children. Sixty-two per cent of the children were reported to be at least one year behind in their intellectual development and 24% of all of the children were three or more years behind. The children who were rated as furthest behind were boys aged 11 to 15 years in residential care. Two-thirds of the children had recognised special educational needs (SEN), half of these, 30%, had Statements of SEN. In comparison, 19% of 5 -15 years olds in private households in 1999 had special educational needs and 3% had a Statement of SEN (Meltzer et al, 2000). These statistics reflect those produced by other research, that the attainment of children in care is disproportionately low and that they are reflected more highly within the figures for children with special educational needs. They add weight to the perception that the current system is not serving these young people well. Far from promoting their well being, many young people are leaving care and education with no qualifications.

Jackson (1994) highlighted the importance of education for all young people "it is the key to success in adult life" (p.267) and a study of care leavers found that they identified education as crucial to an improved life trajectory (Jackson & Martin, 1998). Jackson (2000) went as far as to state that educational achievements could be a powerful protection against social exclusion through qualifications allowing access to further education and to employment which in turn provides financial security, improved housing, nourishment and so on. Walker (1998) describes educational success for young people in care as "their only practical route out of a life-cycle of deprivation and despair" (p.11).

Jackson and Martin (1998) suggest that the poor educational outcomes are largely caused by inadequacies within the care system and they highlight the difficulties faced since the enforcement of the Children Act with “residential care being seen by most social workers as a last resort” (p. 570), foster care remaining unstable and with schools operating in an increasingly competitive environment. The pressure for schools to raise standards and to improve their positions in league tables can at times appear contradictory with guidance aimed towards promoting inclusion. This pressure can increase the risk of children with emotional and behavioural problems to be excluded from school. As many looked after children fall within this category at some point in their school career, this is a particular challenge for practitioners supporting these young people. The Government have produced Guidance aimed at improving this situation, for example “Social Inclusion : Pupil Support” (DoH, 1999), the “Guidance for the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care” (DoH / DfEE, 2000) and “Quality Protects” (DoH, 1998a) with its inclusion of specific objectives relating to the educational achievement of looked after children. Most recently the Prime Minister (Tony Blair) requested the Social Exclusion Unit to carry out a survey and to report on how best to raise the educational attainment of children in care (SEU, 2003). ‘A Better Education for Children in Care’ (SEU, 2003) includes a revised Public Service Agreement which aims to improve the life chances of these children by substantially narrowing the gap between their educational attainment and that of their peers, by 2006. Targets include; that outcomes for 11 year olds in English and maths will be at least 60% as good as those of their peers, that only 10% of young people in care should leave school without having a GCSE equivalent exam and that at least 15% of young people in care should achieve five GCSE grades A-C or equivalent.

Whether Local Authorities will have the ability to effect the necessary change may require more consideration of the factors underlying the educational disadvantage of this group of young people alongside an increased desire and ability to work together in a truly multi-agency manner. For staff within health, social services and education settings to have a true understanding of each other’s values and systems requires time and structures to support joint working.

1.1.2 Exploring the reasons for this underachievement in education

Walker (1998) highlights the contradiction between the research on the educational difficulties faced by children and young people in public care (which points to failures in the care system) and the way in which local authorities have generally 'pathologised' the individual young person. The lack of success that these young people experience in their care and school placements and the high rates of transfer between these has been put down to the young people themselves. Hence, it may be that authorities have not been looking in the right places for the solutions to the difficulties encountered by these young people. Research would suggest that we need to look at a number of factors including the system, interactions between the system and the young people themselves and within their social contexts, for improvements. Suggested factors from the research, are outlined below:

- A lack of continuity of school and care placements and high rates of transfer between these (e.g., Aldgate, Colton, Ghate & Heath, 1992). This affects the ability of the children to form effective relationships within these settings. Difficulties forming attachments to adults and other young people, if not already an issue can arise. In terms of schooling, it can be difficult and unsettling for any child to have to change school, losing the security of familiar friends, surroundings, teachers and routines. These children face the difficulty of possibly changing home as well as school environment and often at inappropriate times of the year without due planning.
- A tendency for the children to come from large families living in poverty with poor housing (Aldgate et al, 1992).
- Traumatic pre-care experiences. Aldgate et al (1992) suggested from their study that children's early history before entry into care could have a profound effect on their educational attainment in middle childhood. Children who experienced compulsory removal from their families because of poor parenting appeared to suffer poorer outcomes than children removed because of parental illness or hardship.
- The absence of an interested adult – many studies (e.g., Pilling, 1990 and Osborn, 1990) identify parental interest in education as very beneficial for children's academic success. For young people in care, some studies identify involvement of birth parents in particular as crucial in continuing to show an

interest in the young person and specifically in their educational achievements (e.g., Weiner & Weiner, 1990)

- Low expectations of teachers, social workers and carers (Jackson, 1994). Social workers can become over-focused on the need to sort out care, teachers may have low expectations based on misconceptions from the media or they may have seen statistics and assumed that all young people in public care therefore must be low achievers, trouble-makers and likely to be excluded from school.
- Effects of stigmatisation and discrimination reducing school attendance and hence achievement (Jackson, 1994). Young people in care are 10 times more likely to be excluded from school than their peers (Biehal et al, 1995). Young people have described being bullied and teased about their home life. Less explicit discrimination can occur, even through the curriculum and many teachers may not be aware or have thought about, (e.g., drawing the family tree in science, writing about what was done at the weekend in English.) Attendance can be affected by the need for a young person to attend reviews and meetings if these are arranged in school time.
- Failures of Departments within local authorities to work together (Fletcher-Campbell, 1997). Problems include little educational planning, poor data management and information exchange, lack of inter-agency understanding and training, as well as conflicting policies and practices (Fletcher-Campbell, 1998).

1.2 Using a Risk and Resilience Framework

Much of the research about young people in public care and their educational experiences is very negative, describing failure and looking to ascribe 'blame', to the young people, their parents, to the care system, to schools or to society as a whole.

Jackson and Martin (1998) and more recently Dent and Cameron (2003) however, move from giving an overview of the chronic difficulties faced by these young people in their education to highlighting the importance of the study of resilience as a way to understand outcomes for this group of very vulnerable young people. Resilience is a construct which has stimulated interest more recently with regard to children who succeed despite early disadvantage. Jackson (2000) refers to the

work of Rutter (1987) looking at turning points in individuals' lives which initiate downward (risk) or upward (protective) spiralling processes and how these can be particularly relevant to young people 'in care'. Walker (1998) too notes that we should be focusing on how the children and young people respond to their environment and the interaction of factors in their lives. These factors may include both risk and protective factors. The large number of risk factors in these young people's lives mean that the study of resilience offers a potentially helpful way of looking for the promotion of successes for them, looking for positives rather than continually focussing on the difficulties faced and the inadequacies of our systems.

1.2.1 Surviving the care system: education and resilience (Jackson & Martin, 1998)

Jackson and Martin's (1998) research moved to studying the experiences of care leavers who had been *successful* in their education and compared their experiences with a group of care leavers who had been *less successful* in education. They identified their successful group as those who had spent more than one year in care and who had obtained five or more O levels or GCSE's (A – C grades) or were in further or higher education. Jackson and Martin (1998) explain that this standard was set because in the National Child Development Study (Pilling, 1990), this level drew a line between those who had 'escaped from disadvantage' and those whose adult life-styles overlapped with those of their parents. This group were then compared with individuals who had not achieved any educational qualifications; through questionnaires about their care and educational experience and their family background, together with follow-up structured interviews with a sub-sample of 'Achievers' who had participated in further or higher education. The subgroup consisted of 38 people (12 men and 26 women) with a mean age of 26 years and all (apart from 1) under 35 years of age. Of these people, 25 had obtained a first degree, several had masters degrees and one person held a Ph.D. The participants were interviewed about their family background, school experience, care experience, higher education, career and personal aspirations and achievements. The interviews were taped and transcribed. The participants were then asked to complete a general health questionnaire (Goldberg & Williams, 1988), a locus of control scale (Rotter, 1966),

a self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and a Life Satisfaction Index (Wood, Wylie & Sheafor, 1969).

Jackson and Martin (1998) found that the in care' experiences of the high achievers and the comparison group were very similar. Jackson (2000) when discussing the same study said that the high achievers had "overcome the many obstacles they faced by extraordinary determination and persistence...they were exceptionally resilient individuals" (Jackson, 2000, p.69). The successful group did show more internal loci of control and had shown good school attendance. Jackson and Martin (1998) underline the importance of learning to read early and fluently for children taken into care at a young age as once in care they are unlikely to gain the consistent adult attention required to support their reading. Once they could read they were less dependent on adults and less likely to be seen as disruptive in either the home or school environment. Reading could act as an escape valve from the stresses of everyday life and could open up new worlds and experiences for them and provide models of alternative childhoods and home-lives. Although Jackson and Martin's study (1998) has stimulated much interest it did have a number of problems.

a) The retrospective nature of the study

The researchers asked people at 25 years of age (average) to recall past experiences of being in care and the difficulties which they faced and the support which they received. It may be that the memories which the participants recalled had been affected or influenced by their more recent experiences, either positively or negatively.

Similarly, psychological measures completed with participants of 25 years of age were used to draw conclusions about their competencies when they were at school. Data from the participants aged 25 years was used to conclude that high achievers were more 'mentally resilient' when they were of school age. For example, the high achievers had significantly more internal loci of control (at 25 years). However, these 'more internal loci of control' could have developed as a consequence of the young people experiencing higher education and employment per se, rather than having been present in the 16 year olds. This is unclear.

b) The representativeness of the sample

The sample of careleavers who came forward did so responding to adverts placed in magazines and they are not therefore necessarily representative of a population of young people who had been in care. Jackson and Martin (1998) acknowledge the difficulty in gaining a sample of successful care-leavers reflecting that many young people at that time, left care at the age of sixteen years and wanted no further contact with social services. Jackson and Martin (1998) recognised that some participants, for example, those who might have been unable to read, without access to the relevant publications or those not wanting to revisit their time spent in care, may have been 'missed'.

None-the-less, the study is very encouraging in offering a risk and resilience framework as an alternative way of looking at the factors faced by young people in public care in achieving success in their education. Jackson and Martin (1998) establish a number of risk and protective factors which can be used to further study this group of vulnerable young people and the difficulties which they face.

Figure 1: Risk and protective factors for educational success for young people in care (Jackson & Martin, 1998)

| Risk Factors | Protective Factors |
|---|--|
| Child maltreatment within the pre-care environment | Learned to read early and fluently |
| Conflict between parents often resulting in single parent families | Friends outside care who did well in education |
| Disability and ill-health of parents, especially mental health problems | Out-of-school interests and hobbies |
| Poverty, inadequate housing and poor neighbourhoods | Significant adult to act as mentor or role model |
| Isolation and racism | |
| Lack of continuity in school and care placements | Stability and continuity |
| Lack of interest in education in the care environment | Parent or carer valued education |
| Lack of educational facilities in the care environment | |

1.2.2 What is resilience?

Cicchetti and Toth (1998) offer the following definition of resilience, it is “the individual's capacity for adapting successfully and functioning competently despite experiencing chronic stress or adversity or following exposure to prolonged or severe trauma (p. 498, based on Masten, Morison, Pelegriani & Tellegen, 1990; Rutter, 1990). Rutter (1990) describes it as “the term to describe the positive pole of the ubiquitous phenomenon of individual difference in people's responses to stress and adversity” (p.181).

Rutter (1990) goes on to outline the background to the construct of resilience. The field of research arose from researchers' interest in individuals' differences in response to stress and adversity. He outlines how three fields of research contributed to the development of resilience as a construct; variations in outcomes for high-risk populations, for example the children of mentally ill patients (Rutter, 1966, 1987a); research into temperament (Rutter, 1977) and the work of Meyer (1957) which looked at the developmental importance of the way that individuals met important life changes and transitions. Rutter adds here the work of Murphy (1962) and Murphy and Moriarty (1976) which focused on coping and mastery, emphasising the active role of the individual, as being important. Cicchetti and Toth (1998) link the development of this field of research with Garmezy's work with schizophrenics where those with a less severe course of illness had experienced a more adaptive early history (Garmezy, 1970). They include work looking at children's responses to trauma, for example children in Northern Ireland (Harbison, 1983) and children of the holocaust grown to adulthood (Epstein, 1979) as important in the development of the field.

Key issues arising from the research on resilience include the following (based on Rutter, 1990): How the individual interacts within their context, as factors outside as well as within the individual are important; that the individual is important in then evaluating, interpreting and behaving dependent on those factors, i.e. that the individual plays an active role; that resilience is not seen as a fixed attribute of the individual, but as a process of positive adaptation or of risk negotiation, which can alter for an individual as circumstances change (the term 'resiliency' has been avoided, Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000). That in researching resilience, an understanding of the underlying risk mechanism is required so that it can be ensured that individuals are exposed to the same dose of the given risk. This

excludes the possibility that successful individuals have not encountered a lower dose of the risk. Rutter (1990) outlined that factors promoting resilience remained, at that time, poorly understood, but argued that the level of risk and the chronicity of the risk exposure was important (see below). However, risk factors do not usually have a straightforward effect, (i.e. one factor may not have an effect, but will if other factors are present).

1.2.3 Risk factors

Howe, Brandon, Hinings and Schofield (1999) describe **risks** as features within children's make-up or experience which might adversely affect their psychosocial development, for example, difficulties at birth, being brought up in poverty or having parents who have mental health problems. Exposure to risks in early development increases the vulnerability of children.

Garmezy and Masten (1994) describe the importance of the two dimensions of chronicity and the cumulative number of factors. It is the presence of a number of stressors which add together to produce a critical level of difficulty, as well as the presence of stressors which last over an extended period of time.

Young people in public care are potentially very vulnerable. In most of these young people's pre-care lives, there are a preponderance of risk factors – child maltreatment, conflict between parents, disability and ill-health of parents, poverty, poor neighbourhoods, preponderance of single parent families, isolation and racism (Jackson & Martin, 1998) as well as domestic violence and bereavement. These young people's past experiences therefore mean that they are likely to be at a higher risk of developmental impairment than their peer group.

Rutter (1990) argues for a shift from focusing on vulnerability and risk to looking at resilience and a parallel shift from studying risk variables to the process of negotiating risk situations and protective mechanisms. These will now be considered.

1.3 Protective Factors, Protective Mechanisms and Resilience

There have been many studies of children and young people who appear to show resilience, (i.e. who despite disadvantaged circumstances, 'succeed' in later life). An answer to the question 'what makes these children show resilience?' would hopefully lead to improvements in practice for all professionals working with socially disadvantaged children. What can we do which will actually make a difference?

1.3.1 Protective factors

Protective factors are individual and environmental features which buffer a person's response to risk factors and stressful life events (Masten & Garmezy, 1985) and which predict **increased resilience** through an ability to resist stress. The presence of protective factors would be expected to be linked with increased success for young people.

Masten and Garmezy (1985) reviewed the research into stress-resistant children and put forward three broad sets of variables which appear to operate as protective factors:

1. Personality Features – self-esteem and positive social orientation.
2. Family Cohesion – warmth and the absence of discord.
3. Availability of external support systems to reinforce and encourage coping efforts.

Cicchetti and Toth (1998) pulled together protective factors which appeared to operate across different risk populations, many of which overlap with the above. These included easy temperament, low level of autonomic arousal, positive coping skills, an ability to get support from adults and peers, maintenance of psychological distance from family, participation in a church community, attendance at school / college, a supportive friend or partner, family religious beliefs and the presence of affection ties which encourage the development of trust, autonomy and initiative (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990 ;Werner & Smith, 1982). In addition, some factors were identified which ameliorated the adaptation of high risk groups alone, such as intelligence

(Garmezy, Masten & Tellegen, 1984), easy temperament (Mazaide, Caron, Cote, Merette, Bernier, Laplante, Boutin & Thivierge, 1990), positive future expectations (Werner & Smith, 1992), humour (Masten, 1986), maternal social competence (Conrad & Hammen, 1993) close secure relationships with nonparental adults (Beardslee & Podorefsky, 1988), and effective planning (Quinton & Rutter, 1988). Cicchetti and Toth (1998) point out that these mechanisms may not function in the same way across all high risk groups and may not be protective in all developmental stages. Therefore any application of factors to a specific group will require knowledge of which factors are important for that particular group at that particular age.

Garmezy (1997) reviewed the condition of risk and resilience research and identified the following factors as protective; stable care, problem-solving abilities, manifest competence and perceived efficacy, attractiveness to peers and adults, identification with competent role models and planfulness and aspiration. Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Higgitt and Target (1994) looked at attachment theory in relation to protective factors and resilience and suggested the importance of secure attachments. This is linked with the concept of the child's reflective-self function which is described as an ability to reflect upon people's behaviour (self and others), in terms of the interaction between thoughts and feelings and how these impact on behaviour. The development of this reflective-self will depend on how accurately the parent perceives the child and their needs and whether the parent is able to reflect on the child's experience. This in turn will necessitate the presence of an attentive and sensitive caregiver who can recognise and respond accurately to the child's mental state. Dent and Cameron (2003) reflect on the importance of parenting style and highlight that previous research indicated that an authoritative style was the most effective in promoting positive outcomes for children. Authoritative parents "establish and firmly reinforce rules and standards for their children's behaviour, and consistently monitor and use non-punitive methods of discipline when rules are violated" (p. 8). Authoritative parents are highly demanding yet are warm and responsive to the needs of their children. This style of parenting appears to offer the conditions required for secure attachments to develop. Fonagy et al (1994) have produced a 'curriculum for parents' which includes many of the issues discussed.

Children whose parents are mentally ill or absent are likely to be at increased risk of failing to develop secure attachments and a reflective self-function. These individuals will be vulnerable to situations where reflection upon the mental state of themselves and others is required. This may in turn lead to difficulties in using social support, having a coherent sense of self, lacking interpersonal awareness and empathy which help in the understanding and management of social relationships. It can be seen that these difficulties will raise problems for a child or young person in dealing with their everyday life and they are likely to experience significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Fonagy et al (1994) theorise whether the educational system can begin to provide input to compensate for and enhance the awareness of 'others' minds'.

Dent and Cameron (2003) outline the difficulties faced by a child or young person who has not developed secure attachments. They emphasise how everyday stressors and occurrences can become major hurdles for children without such attachments, for example, learning within a classroom, interactions with peers and starting work. They suggest that insecurely attached young people are at greater risk of experiencing a number of problems at turning points in their lives, for example, bullying incidents, teenage pregnancy, delinquency, drug abuse, depression and difficulties with relationships.

1.3.2 Protective mechanisms

Rutter (1990) argues for the need to search for protective mechanisms and processes as well as simply seeking protective factors, for a better understanding of resilience. "If research into resilience seeks to distil everything down to a few key global composites, we shall only end up where we started" (Rutter, 1990, p. 182). He argues that rather than simply identifying that some individuals manage to maintain high levels of self-esteem despite adversity that would cause others to give up, research should seek to find out how that high self-esteem is maintained, how that individual has others to support them and how they manage to use that support in times of crisis?

Rutter (1990) outlines how protection arises from adaptive changes which follow successful coping through an experience of adversity or stress. He likens this to immunisation whereby to attain protection, the individual is actually exposed to a

low dose of the risk factor. He also outlines how many protective processes involve key turning points in people's lives, rather than long-standing attributes or experiences. He gives examples of young people making a decision to stay on at school which could then open up new life opportunities for them and improve their life trajectory. Alternatively, a successful young woman becoming pregnant, turned away by her family and being forced to leave school could then be changing her life trajectory from positive to negative. Rutter (1990) looks at four possible mechanisms through which protective factors operating psychologically may be causing their effect; reduction of risk impact; reduction of negative chain reaction arising from the impact; the establishment and maintenance of self-esteem and the opening up of opportunities. Each of these will now be considered.

1.3.2.1 Reduction of risk impact

Rutter (1990) suggests that this can occur either through altering the meaning of the riskiness of the variable for that child or by altering the child's exposure to or involvement in the risk situation. Individuals who have been exposed to risk in a graduated way and have been able to cope are more likely to continue to show resistance to stressors in later life. This successful adaptation may have come about through previous experience of negative events, of how these events were dealt with and what the consequences were. Some individuals can integrate difficult experiences with more positive ones so that they can be re-evaluated in a less threatening way. Neutralising life events can reduce the impact of risk, for example after losing a job, being offered a similar or better position which counteracts the damage to self-esteem which occurred from the original job loss. The effect needs to be domain specific, for example, getting a promotion at work is not likely to reduce the impact of being left by a partner. Examples of reducing exposure to risk include adult supervision of children in high-risk neighbourhoods leading to decreased rates of delinquency (Wilson, 1974, 1980).

1.3.2.2 Reduction of negative chain reactions

Reduction of negative chain reactions involves considering the effects of what happens *after* the risk occurs. For example, the loss of a parent in early childhood leads to a lack of affectionate care and therefore increased risk. The impact of the

risk can be reduced by supporting the remaining parent to function well and to give the affectionate care that has been lost.

1.3.2.3 Promotion of self-esteem and self-efficacy

Research has shown the importance of feelings about self, the social environment and the individual's ability to deal with life's challenges and to have control. Rutter (1990) outlines two types of experience, which are most protective in terms of establishing a sense of self-worth and confidence. Firstly, having secure and supportive personal relationships, from childhood's selective attachment through to partnerships in adulthood. Secondly, experiencing task accomplishment – specifically for tasks of interest and importance to the individual. For example having responsibilities in school (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston & Smith, 1979) or at home (Elder, 1979).

1.3.2.4 Opening up opportunities

Transitions and turning points are particularly important in opening up avenues, for example success in education leading to increased employment opportunities, avoiding teenage parenthood leading to increased chances of choosing a less-deviant partner (Rutter & Quinton, 1984) or a geographical move opening up new social opportunities.

1.4 Studying Resilience

Cicchetti and Toth (1998) use a developmental psychopathology framework in considering resilience. Within their organisational perspective, development is seen as a series of structural reorganisations within and between biological and behavioural systems of the individual, proceeding by means of differentiation and hierarchical integration. Within this, at each stage of development, as new challenges are met prior developmental structures are incorporated into later ones and successful adaptation is attained. This framework helps us to understand the variation in the outcomes for individuals exposed to risk depending on, for example, variations in the intensity and duration of the exposure to risk (Garmezy and Masten, 1994), the cumulative effect of multiple and combinations of stressors or risk factors (Rutter, 1987) and the context in which the risk occurs.

Another complicating factor in the study of resilience is the co-occurrence of risk and protective factors which can lead to difficulties in disentangling the influencing factors especially when some may be moderating or mediating factors for other variables. Cicchetti and Toth (1998) do highlight that there is a greater likelihood for the development of incompetence for children where the vulnerability factors (risks) and challenges outweigh the protective and buffering factors.

Finally, and as alluded to earlier in the review, Rutter (1990) highlights the need for the search for the underlying processes impacting on individuals rather than purely focussing on specific factors. This is because it is not the risk and protective factors per se which cause maladaptive outcomes, but it is how they interact and how the individual adapts which results in the outcome for the individual.

1.4.1 Defining resilience

Defining what is meant by resilience has been an issue for researchers reviewing this field of research, as there is little consistency and the terms used are often not defined rigorously giving rise to difficulties comparing and contrasting the results of different studies (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000). McGloin and Widom (2001) carried out a study looking at identifying resilient individuals who had been abused or neglected as children. They note the difficulties in defining resilience in the maltreatment literature alone, citing the studies of Chandy, Blum and Resnick (1996) who defined resilience as 'performing above average in school, no suicide risk, no marijuana use and infrequent or no use of alcohol or tobacco' compared to that used by Chambers and Belicki (1998) that resilient participants should have a 'good quality of sleep'. Cicchetti and Toth (1998) underline the need to look at functioning across multiple domains to really look at adaptation, for example across cognitive functioning and social relationships. McGloin and Widom (2001) used this type of definition highlighting the risk that a narrow definition would ignore the pervasiveness of risk where problems in one domain, e.g. cognitive functioning would be likely to be interacting and reciprocally influencing another domain, e.g. social relationships. McGloin and Widom's (2001) definition, like that of Cicchetti, Rogosch, Lynch and Holt (1993), included sampling participants' skills across interpersonal behaviours relevant to successful peer relations, indices of possible school difficulties and psychopathology. They

highlight the need to consider 'time' as an aspect of resilience as they argue that because it is a dynamic process rather than a personality trait, taking a snapshot view will misrepresent the functioning and adaptation of individuals. Details of this study can be found in the next section.

1.5 Research Studies of Resilience and Children

In reviewing research in the area of resilience, studies appear to fall within three broad categories depending upon the research questions being asked.

- 1) Can we identify a group of individuals who show resilience within an at-risk population?
- 2) What are the characteristics of children who show resilience?
- 3) Can we identify potential risk and protective factors and start to elucidate the interactions between factors?

Several studies will be considered in more detail which fall into the above three categories.

1.5.1 Category one study

1.5.1.1 Resilience in neglected and abused children grown-up

The study of McGloin and Widom (2001) investigated resilience amongst adults who had been abused or neglected as children, seeking to "operationalise the construct of resilience across a number of domains of functioning and time periods and to determine the extent to which abused and neglected children grown up demonstrate resilience " (p. 1021). The study compared a group of children who had been abused or neglected as identified through county court records between 1967 and 1971 with a control group matched on age, gender, ethnicity, family SES and with no official record of abuse or neglect. The identified children were then followed up with two hour interviews between 1989 and 1995 which included psychiatric assessment and the completion of rating scales covering functioning in eight domains. The domains were as follows: employment, homelessness, education, social activity, psychiatric disorder, substance abuse, official arrest and self-reports of violence. They looked for a lack of evidence of problems in six out of the eight domains at the time of interview and across the

lifetime of the individual in order to label that individual as resilient. McGloin and Widom's (2001) definition therefore looked at a snapshot as well as at lifetime occurrence of difficulties across 8 areas. McGloin and Widom (2001) discussed the difficulties of making the criteria for resilience too stringent, but the flexibility of six out of eight areas of successful functioning meant that they identified 22% of abused and neglected individuals as resilient compared to 41.2% of the control group.

The abused and neglected group differed significantly from the control group on six out of the eight domains, excluding social activity and substance abuse. The levels of the latter were high for both groups. There were significant differences between the two groups in terms of successes across the domains with more participants from the control group with success in more of the domains than from the abused / neglected group. Females tended to be more successful than males with 51.3% of control females meeting criteria for resilience, 32.5% of control males, 26.6% of abused / neglected females and 17.6% of abused / neglected males. It was found that sexual abuse and neglect were significant negative predictors of resilience but physical abuse was not a significant predictor in either direction. Having shown that resilient individuals can be identified, the paper indicates the need for research to go on to look at the *mechanisms* that differentiate the groups of resilient abused / neglected participants from their peers.

The authors go on to look at the shortcomings of the study in terms of whether the at risk individuals were subject to comparable levels of adversity, for example, the type of abuse or neglect, the severity and chronicity of maltreatment, the child's cognitive appraisal of the event and the family and community response which may all have been important (Widom, 2000). It may be that those who were identified as resilient experienced less exposure to the risk, for example were abused for a shorter period of time, by someone more distanced from the family, in a different phase of their life or the child may have received therapeutic support after the event.

McGloin and Widom (2001) consider the definition of resilience used and suggest that the domains chosen and the method of incorporating time may have influenced the levels of resilience identified. Perhaps more significantly, the study

did not look at other risk factors which may have been important in the individuals' lives. This author would add that the control group were identified by the lack of official records of abuse. However, from reviews of the maltreatment literature it is clear that the identification of control groups in this way is problematic because of the level of maltreatment which is unidentified or does not reach the courts. It is therefore impossible to know that the control group did not contain participants who were abused or neglected. They too may have been subject to other risks and stressors in their lifetimes which may have impacted on their functioning across the identified domains.

Finally, McGloin and Widom (2001) acknowledge the difficulties of generalising their findings to wider populations because of the geographical restrictedness of their sample and because of the fact that it only consisted of cases substantiated by court.

1.5.2 Category two study

1.5.2.1 The Kauai longitudinal study

Werner and Smith's (1982) Kauai longitudinal study was concerned with looking at the characteristics of children whom they identified to be resilient. Their study group consisted of the children and grandchildren of immigrants who left poverty within their homelands to work in Hawaii. The children were raised in chronic poverty, were exposed to higher than average rates of perinatal stress and were brought up by mothers with low levels of education. Werner and Smith (1982) found that 10% of infants who experienced 4 or more risk factors before 2 years of age grew up into competent and autonomous young adults. These children could be said to be resilient in terms of social and emotional success. These children were compared with other high-risk children of the same age and sex who did develop coping problems before their twentieth birthdays.

As infants the resilient children were described as active, affectionate, cuddly, easy to deal with in the pre-school years, having a sense of autonomy and being socially orientated with good communication skills, good gross motor and self-help skills. In middle childhood, these children were sociable, independent, concentrated on schoolwork and had good impulse control being more thoughtful

than other children. The children had a sense of self-efficacy and were skilled problem-solvers and communicators. They had internal loci of control and could use flexible coping strategies in overcoming adversity. In adolescence, the young people showed a similar pattern and were more responsible and achievement orientated than their peers. They preferred structure in their lives.

Specifically in this study, 'intelligence' was found to be positively correlated with individual resilience possibly through young people having a better understanding and being able to generate more solutions for problems and strategies to deal with problems than young people with less 'intelligence'. A development of a secure attachment and stable care from at least one person in the family as well as a need to take on domestic responsibilities, religious beliefs, positive peer relationships, effective and positive school experiences were found to be important.

1.5.3 Category three studies

The following studies have been more concerned with trying to identify protective and risk factors for different cohorts of at-risk populations.

1.5.3.1 High achieving socially disadvantaged children

Osborn's (1990) research used data from the 1970 Child Health and Education Study (British Birth Cohort) to carry out a longitudinal study of children from birth, followed up at 5 and 10 years of age. At five years of age, 13,135 children were traced, mothers were interviewed by health visitors and the children completed cognitive tests. In 1980 at the ten year follow-up, 14,906 children were traced. Again, health visitors carried out home interviews and at this time school staff provided information about the school environment and about the children's attainment. School medical officers completed medical examinations. Assessment results were used to construct a three-category competence index which segmented the sample of children into a low ability or 'problem group', a high ability or 'exceptional group' and a group of children who had no particular problems but whose school performance was not exceptional – 'the competent group'. Osborn (1990) then defined his vulnerable group as those who were brought up within a family of low socio-economic status, judged by parental occupation and education, housing - type and tenure, a crowding index and car

and telephone ownership. Children within the lowest decile of the assigned and aggregated social indicator scores were defined as 'the most disadvantaged'.

Osborne (1990) found that family size and maternal depression had the greatest effects on whether a child from a low socio-economic group, (i.e. disadvantaged), would fall within the defined 'problem, competent or exceptional' groups. Osborn (1990) found that children whose parents read to them, had aspirations for their further education but were over concerned with their ability – were more likely to be in the competent group rather than the problem group. Children within the exceptional group were more likely to have parents with aspirations for further education, a mother whom the teacher judged to be interested in education, and a mother with a non-authoritarian worldview. Being in a school with a population of high ability pupils was beneficial. These factors could therefore be described as protective factors. Osborn (1990) identified the following as reducing the chance that children would be exceptional: Mother being a poor reader and the mother having been in care herself. Therefore these two factors, mother being a poor reader and mother having been in care could, alongside the factors of family size and maternal depression outlined above, be considered risk factors. This study is interesting in its attempt to look at a large data set, more longitudinal data and so looking at predictive validity of factors rather than taking a snapshot.

1.5.3.2 "Escape from disadvantage"

Pilling's (1990) study looked at socially disadvantaged children who had 'escaped from disadvantage'. The sample consisted of 386 children identified within the National Child Development Study (1983-1986) as being socially disadvantaged at the ages of 11 or 16 years or at both ages. The study aimed to identify factors which might be associated with escape from social disadvantage.

The timing of disadvantage was found to have more long-lasting effects on educational success than the duration of disadvantage. Early disadvantage had the most effect. In terms of the family situation, Pilling (1990) found that educational achievers were most likely to be living with both parents at the age of 16 years compared with only just over half of the less successful. This effect is discussed in terms of material disadvantage, family relationship problems and parental time and availability; two parent families being more likely to have more

money than single-parent families, there being more stability within a two-parent home and there being more adults in the home to support the young person. Pilling's (1990) research replicated Osborn's in terms of 'literacy' measures in the home and parent's interest and aspirations for education. Shared religious beliefs or family rituals appeared to be protective. The community was important in terms of the number of employment opportunities and the relationship between these and there being money within the home. The individual's own determination and motivation to succeed was another critical protective factor.

Overall, the study provided support for an adaptational model of development, whereby most individuals are capable of succeeding if they receive support and are buffered against stresses and negative life events. It was how people coped with disadvantages and were able to take new opportunities which were critical in terms of what then happened to them.

1.5.3.3 Identifying at-risk children through their performance

A study carried out by Catterall (1998) is of interest in that rather than taking an identified at risk population, for example abused children, he identified children at risk through their actually manifesting difficulties in school, independent of other characteristics or group membership. He used data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:1988) which comprised a nationally representative sample of children in grade 8 (aged 12-13 years) in the U.S.A. The initial data was collected in 1988 and was then followed up every two years. Catterall (1998) used the initial data to identify children who expressed doubts about finishing school (n=4000, 18% of the sample) and children who had achieved C grades or lower, as English grades between grades 6 and grades 8 (n=7000, 26%). Catterall (1998) then followed up his sample to look at factors affecting drop out rates and student resilience. He defined student resilience as recovery from low performance or recovery from poor commitment to finish school. His study looked at data from standardised tests, student surveys, parent and teacher reports. In terms of student dropout Catterall (1998) found that the main reasons for drop out were 'alienation from school' and 'failing in school'. In terms of student resilience as defined in this study, Catterall found that 64% of students at academic risk in grade 8 were "resilient", (i.e. showed grade improvements from grade C to grades A or B). He reports that the results reflect

those of an earlier study by Gordon and Song (1994) where individual background, family supports, environment supports, achievement and engagement in school, individual attributes and institutional responsiveness were all sources of influence in terms of recovery for these students. He identified supportive family behaviour, student engagement in activities and school responsiveness to the needs of students as all being of particular importance for resilience. Catterall (1998) draws positive conclusions from the degree of motility within this pupil population and argues for not identifying entire 'at risk' populations without looking at individual pupil success in school. Catterall ends by summarising the weaknesses of the study in terms of the quality of, for example, engagement in school not being investigated, that there was no study of any interaction processes, there was therefore no study of causal processes and that there is more need for in-depth study of life paths for individual pupils.

1.5.3.4 A dual study

Finally, the study by Radke-Yarrow and Sherman (1990) is of interest because it incorporates not only the search for protective factors through investigation of a large number of at risk children and families, but the study then goes on to look at four individual case studies to try and start illuminating some of the processes underlying the resilience seen in these children. The study looked at children being reared in chaotic and threatening, multi-risk families. They then looked for children who were managing well, in terms of performance at school (at least average grade level), with no psychiatric diagnosis, who related well to adults and peers and who had a positive self-concept. Data was drawn from the NIMH child-rearing study (Radke-Yarrow, 1989) which was a multi-assessment database of 123 families where either one or both of the parents had been diagnosed as depressed or alternatively, neither parent (the control group). Families were identified as such. There were at least two children in the families, one of 2-3 years of age who was followed up at 5-6 years of age and an older child of 5-8 years who was followed up at 8-11 years of age. The families were primarily from middle-class backgrounds with a subsample of 9 socially disadvantaged families.

The results showed that in the high risk sample, 40% of the children had problems compared to 11% in the 'normal' group. For the older children, 33% of the children from high risk families met the criteria for successful social, emotional and

cognitive functioning compared to 69% from the healthy families. The four case studies were then chosen, one representative of each age group and gender, for further study. The authors commented on the child's situation, on their siblings and on the costs already incurred by the child which, they surmise, may eventually compromise the child's competence.

Results from this part of the study were that each child had a 'loving relationship' with at least one parent, despite 'parental illness' and 'family disorder'. Each child was mastering tasks at school and succeeding in maintaining positive relationships in school. Two key factors were identified which contributed to the children's success: one was a match between a physical or psychological attribute of the child and a core need in one or both parents which that attribute fulfilled. This led to the second factor which was that the child then had a conception of the fact that there was something special about them which provided a source of positive self-regard for the child. For the children studied, this 'match' was present early and remained stable over time. For example, for one child 'Dominique' her attributes were that she was healthy and sturdy. Her mother valued this as it reflected well on her caring for her children. Alternatively, Dominique's sisters were often ill which provided a source of tension for their mother and set up a negative interaction for them which was not present for Dominique. She was doing better than her sisters in terms of resilience. Another quality exhibited and identified was a 'quiet' and 'happy temperament' and these children went on to fulfil the need of 'confidante' to their depressed mothers.

The positive self-regard experienced by the children in the family then influenced their self-esteem and patterns of behaviour which then extended outside of the family. Their styles of interacting were generalised into school where they experienced a positive regard from peers and teachers and from adults within the community. Other factors identified in the study were that the children were all alert and curious, of above average intelligence with a 'zest for living'. They were attractive, charming and socially engaging.

In terms of adaptation, Radke-Yarrow and Sherman (1990) look at the children's coping patterns and the way that they organised their lives. Dominique for example, was identified as distancing herself from her family. This could be positive if she sought support from a friendly and supportive adult, but could be

less so if she attached herself to an older 'streetwise child' who was actually equally vulnerable. Of the other children two had devoted themselves to being lovable and to seeking attachments and friendships. One of these kept the negative stress out of her behaviour which may have lead to internalising problems. Another child was acting out and getting into trouble in school. These findings suggested that even children who were identified as 'resilient' were still having difficulties and certainly in the long term, if the balance of stressors and protective factors did not shift, they were likely to find themselves experiencing difficulties.

1.6 Problems with the Construct of Resilience and with Resilience Research

Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000) outline the increasing interest in the field of resilience but alongside it growing concerns about the rigor of research and theory in the area, resulting in statements about resilience being "a construct of dubious scientific value" (p.543). They go on to review difficulties with resilience research.

1.6.1 Theoretical concerns

Luthar et al (2000) discuss how some researchers raise concerns about resilience studies being empirically driven rather than being theoretically based. They argue for resilience research being based within other more general psychological frameworks or developmental theories, for example, Garmezy's (1985) theory that protective and vulnerability processes affecting at risk children operate across three broad levels, the community, family and child. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Theory has also influenced the research whereby there are interactions between the developing child and their environment with diverse risks being identified from the different ecological levels around the child. Thirdly the organisational perspective outlined above (section 1.4) whereby successful adaptation is attained through structural reorganisations occurring. At each stage of development, as new challenges are met, previous developmental structures are incorporated and adaptation is achieved.

Luthar et al (2000) argue for researchers making clear the theory as it relates to the particular group of individuals studied, in this case, young people in public care. Currently, resilience does not offer one conceptual model against which

hypotheses can be put forward. It is still an area of research which is developing. Frameworks of risk and protective factors are available from previous research to guide work, but the underlying processes for specific groups of at risk individuals are not yet elucidated to form a coherent model. For young people in care, there is a hypothesised list of factors as put forward by Jackson and Martin (1998) and upon which the hypothesis testing in this research is based. Further reflections around the difficulties encountered and possible improvements for clarifying the theoretical approach to the work and building upon previous research can be found in Chapter Five (5.3).

1.6.2 Problems with definition and the use of terminology

Luthar et al (2000) discuss the lack of consensus between researchers, not only in the definition of resilience and how it is operationalised, but in the terminology used, for example with misunderstandings and misuse of the terms protective factors and vulnerability factors. They go on to discuss the importance of main effects models and interactive models in labelling factors as protective, for example. This has not been addressed in this thesis where a more pragmatic approach has been taken. Definitions have been given in this thesis which seek to clearly delineate the approach taken, whilst acknowledging the constraints which this pragmatic approach has placed on any conclusions.

Secondly, as referred to above, Luthar et al (2000) emphasise the importance of the term resiliency being avoided as this infers that it is a personality trait or attribute of the child and that children can 'make' themselves resilient. Rather they advocate for the term resilience to be used in referring to adaptation or to life trajectories signalling that it is a dynamic process whereby children are active agents but in interacting with the factors within their own particular contexts and environments. In this thesis the author has sought to try and avoid labelling children as resilient, instead describing them as 'educationally successful' whilst defining resilience within this study as achieving at school and showing adaptive behaviour.

1.6.3 The multidimensional nature of resilience

Luthar et al (2000) describe the difficulties encountered in research due to the nature of resilience – with diverse outcomes possible for children within different domains, (i.e. that a child may present resilient adaptation in the social domain whilst failing within the academic domain). This leads to difficulties in specifying optimal outcome indicators of resilience and great variability between studies. In these studies the definition of resilience was laid down, in terms of two domains, educational attainment and adaptive behaviour. Success in peer relationships was actually viewed as the continuum of a risk / protective factor within this study rather than being subsumed within the definition as a domain of resilience. McGloin and Widom's (2001) study whereby resilience is defined as success in six out of eight different domains attempts more clearly to look at this issue.

1.6.4 The robustness of the scientific evidence

Luthar et al (2000) acknowledge the difficulties in carrying out robust research in this area and in providing definitive results. As discussed above, Rutter (1990) describes that to measure resilience we need to know that individuals have experienced the same level or dose of risk. Luthar et al (2000) acknowledge the difficulty with this and discuss ways around this. The current study has not addressed this difficulty, looking only at the number of risk factors, at whatever level and in whatever 'dosage' for the young people involved.

The instability of statistical findings in resilience research is acknowledged and the instability in the phenomenon in that, as a dynamic process, an individual can exhibit resilient adaptation at one point in time and can, at another point in time appear to be succumbing to additional stressors.

1.6.5 Resilience as a distinct construct

Whether 'resilience' should be viewed as a distinct construct rather than as a framework which pulls together other underlying psychological constructs is in itself an area for debate not entered into within this thesis because of the limitations of the scope of the work.

Luthar et al (2000) discussed the overlap between the construct of resilience and that of positive adaptation, suggesting that resilience should be retained as a separate construct as it adds value in terms of considering specifically how successful adaptation can occur within the dimension of significant adversity (positive adjustment does not delineate between adverse and normative environments), and that adaptation can occur which defies “normative expectations” (p.553). They highlight that the research so far appears to suggest that in some situations, different pathways are followed and different psychological processes are occurring which argue for keeping the two constructs separate.

1.7 Aims and Rationale for the Current Research

1.7.1 Introduction

The literature review highlighted the difficulties faced by young people in care and their limited educational outcomes. The lack of research which specifically focused on reasons for this underachievement, from a psychological perspective, was marked. As a specialist educational psychologist for children in care at the time the research was planned, the researcher felt that this area was one which needed addressing. Without a psychological evidence base on which to guide intervention, attempts to improve things for this group of young people would continue to be guided by research from a purely educational or care perspective and would be based on previous good practice. Given the level of attachment disruption, loss and bereavement which these young people experience in being removed from their families and then moving through the care system with its inherent lack of control for the young person, a psychological perspective would appear to be an obvious gap.

From the review of the literature, the development of resilience for vulnerable young people depends upon a balance between the risks to which they are exposed, stressors in the present and their capacity to cope with stressors. This in turn depends upon the degree to which they have been exposed to these in the past and how they have coped with them. Rutter (1985) emphasises the ability of some young people with a “track record of successful adaptation following exposure to biological and psychosocial risk factors or stressful life events” and

the protection this offers them from future stressors. Children in public care can be seen to be a particular case in terms of their unique family and social context, in terms of them not living with family and their lack of permanency. When the protective factors and the risk factors are considered, it is certainly concerning to think how few protective factors many of these children have and how many risk factors they are exposed to.

It was therefore decided to build on the work of Jackson and Martin (1998) who had introduced resilience as a psychological construct which could be used to frame a more positive approach to research into and ultimately intervention for improving the educational attainment of young people in care. They brought in a search for factors which would help young people to succeed despite adversity rather than focusing on the difficulties inherent within the systems and the failures which had already been identified in previous research for these young people. This approach to the research is more practical in that it looks for operational variables over which practitioners working in the field have some control and can effect change.

The research reported in this thesis aimed to contribute to the developing field of resilience with a specific focus on children in public care. It builds on the work of Jackson and Martin (1998) and is a part-replication but with a sample from a younger cohort (young people currently within the education and care system rather than care-leavers) and using research tools more appropriate to this age group. The research takes protective and risk factors identified from previous research (e.g., Jackson & Martin, 1998) and analyses their presence in a sample of the population of young people in public care in a Local Authority in England. It then seeks to identify whether young people who are 'educationally successful' have more protective factors and / or less risk factors in their lives than less successful young people. It then looks at the occurrence and interaction of specific factors across the two groups of young people and whether factors within different areas of the young people's life (factors experienced before the child entered care, factors within the care placement and within-child factors) are important. It was also hoped that if specific factors were identified then the young people could be followed-up to see if the factors were predictive of educational success.

Werner (1990) highlighted the need for studies to go further than looking at risk factors alone to a need to look at the interplay between multiple risk and protective factors within the individual, their family and larger social context. A second aim of the research therefore was to identify themes in individual young people's lives in order to enhance the understanding of what was occurring for them.

Overall, the research aimed to identify areas which might prove useful for Local Authorities in terms of what could *actually* be done to raise the educational attainments of young people in public care. It was also hoped that the research may help improve assessments of these young people by educational psychologists through suggesting a structured framework to identify positive strategies as well as areas of concern. This might support individual educational psychologists who recognised the difficulties of using psychometric testing and of the judgements that might be made on the results of such testing for young people whose performance might be affected by many different variables not taken into account when the reported assessments were interpreted and used to make judgements about provision and school placements.

1.7.2 Rationale for the research design

1.7.2.1 The identification of risk and protective factors across the sample – the questionnaires

In order to identify risk and protective factors present in young people in care's lives a quantitative approach was chosen, using a survey questionnaire. It was hoped that this would generate factors which could be generalisable to other young people in care which could in turn offer a focus for future interventions for this group of young people. Questionnaires were used as although time was required for planning, design and for piloting (see Study 1), it was felt that they offered a quick and relatively easy way of gathering structured data. The questionnaires did not need to be administered by the researcher and so a relatively large number could be sent out. They would be likely to be quite easy to analyse having been designed explicitly for this research and being based on the risk and protective factors put forward (see below).

1.7.2.2 Identifying themes – the semi-structured interviews and the case studies

In order to address the second aim of the research, it was decided to use semi-structured interviews to provide the opportunity for the researcher to meet the young people and to explore their experiences with them. This more interpretive approach was felt to be valuable as it was recognised that the young people were interacting with the factors present in their lives, and that these interpretations would influence their behaviour, including how they responded in school. It would produce sets of themes which would contribute insight and understanding to the young people's behaviour and from these, multiple theories could arise specific to the young people in their varied contexts and situations.

The interview responses would provide more information about the risk and protective factors present in the young people's lives and would allow the researcher to follow-up in more depth any issues arising from the questionnaires. The interviews would give a view of the young people's perceptions of their own life experiences and would contribute to the reflection around how factors interacted in individual young people's lives, which was not gained from the questionnaires.

After completion of this thesis, the experiences of two of the young people were written-up as case studies to offer a more illustrative and narrative approach to some of the young people's life experiences. This provided an opportunity for the researcher to explore the interactions of factors and turning points in the young people's lives in more detail. They are found in Appendix 3.5, as there was no scope to include them within the main body of this thesis.

1.7.3 Rationale for the methodology

1.7.3.1 Defining resilience within the current study

Cicchetti and Toth (1998) underlined the need to consider the definition of resilience used and the danger of using too narrow a definition given that children can show resilient functioning in one domain but not in another. They highlighted the need to recognise the effects of time in defining the construct, (i.e. that taking a snapshot could miss important information as individuals can show resilient

adaptation at one point in their life, but then something could occur which might result in a more negative outcome).

Osborn (1990) used the definition of resilient as “children who are vulnerable, yet achieve competence”. He then goes on to consider ‘competence’ and whether it should be seen as avoiding failure or achieving high success. Osborn (1990) used educational attainment and behavioural adjustment as reasonable in expressing the main dimensions of competence although acknowledging that this ignores other aspects of social and emotional functioning. His study therefore focused on children performing ‘reasonably well’ at school who were well-adjusted within the home and school environments. Jackson and Martin (1998) defined resilience within their samples as educational success and access to further education (see 1.2.1 for further details of their definition).

Resilience is defined in this thesis in terms of academic success. *Resilient individuals are seen as those who, despite adverse circumstances, have been ‘successful’ academically in their education.* ‘Successful’ is further defined as *attaining nationally average results in their Standardised Attainment Tests (SATs).* A factor of adaptive behaviour within school is also included within the definition, *that the young person will not have been excluded from school.* Obviously this is defining ‘resilience’ within a very narrow range and is not considering those who might ‘fail’ educationally at the age of 16 years, but might then return to education in later life and succeed. It takes a narrow view of success in life as many would argue that one does not need to be successful academically to live a fulfilling life. However, as educational underachievement is so important in determining future life chances for this group of young people, resilience is defined in educational terms within this piece of research. Implications of this definition will be discussed in light of the results obtained.

The issue of ‘taking a snapshot view’ is considered only in that academic success tends to be cumulative and so taking the child’s achievement against nationally set curricular levels at one point is likely to reflect adaptive functioning over a number of years. Exclusions from school will be included over the child’s school life span. The definitions are operationalised further within the methodology of the studies reported in this thesis.

1.7.3.2 Defining the risk factors and protective factors

The factors in this research were introduced using a framework. Gore and Eckenrode (1997) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of classifying risk and protective factors into such a framework and warn against the danger of this obscuring forms of inter-relatedness occurring between factors and between the person and their environment, (e.g., the use of social support may be affected by the person's individual level of self-esteem). They describe difficulties where factors co-occur, (e.g., where some individuals have many factors, some of which mask the effect of others), or where a very high level of one factor may substitute for a complete absence of another. These types of interactions and their importance may be missed if group factors are analysed together or if individual stressor effects are sought.

The framework approach is acknowledged as having some difficulties, but it was used within this research study in order to lend some structure to the research questions asked. The following factors were investigated. They are defined within Studies 1, 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Framework of Risk and Protective Factors

| | Protective Factor | Risk Factor |
|---------------|---|---|
| Within Child | 1) Internal locus-of-control (Jackson & Martin, 1998) 2) Learning to read fluently and early (Jackson & Martin, 1998) 3) Planfulness and aspiration (Garmezy, 1997) | 1) Negative social orientation (Masten and Garmezy, 1985) 2) Behaviour difficulties 3) Low self-esteem (Masten & Garmezy, 1985) |
| Environmental | 1) Presence of an interested adult (Jackson & Martin, 1998) 2) Successful friends who are not in care (Jackson & Martin, 1998) 3) Interest and support for learning in the care / home environment (Jackson & Martin, 1998) | 1) Time out of school – exclusion or truancy (Jackson, 1994) 2) High number of placements (Jackson & Martin, 1998) 3) Parent with mental health problems (Jackson & Martin, 1998) |

Based upon the factors within this framework and the definition of resilience in terms of educational success the following research questions were posed:

1.8 Specific Research Questions

1.8.1 *"How do young people in care who are educationally successful in school compare to those who are not on a range of 6 **protective** (3 within-child, 3 environmental) and **risk** factors (3 within-child, 3 environmental)?"*

1.8.2 *"Is it possible to identify how some individual young people develop resilience (i.e. educational success) and how the factors in their lives interact with each other in the development of resilience?"*

It would be useful to begin an investigation into the separate risk and protective factors experienced by individual young people and to look for differences between the two groups of young people, those assigned to the educationally successful and less successful groups, on the presence of those factors. Do young people in care who are less successful at school show **different patterns** of pre-care experiences, (e.g., having experienced a higher number of traumatic pre-care experiences, lacking early parental care, having experienced bereavements, i.e. were they exposed to more stressors increasing their risk of difficulties in development?).

1.8.3 *"If specific factors or causal mechanisms are identified, do these fall within a specific microsystem for the child, e.g., home, birth family, school, peers, within-child?"*

1.8.4 *"If protective factors are identified are they predictive of future success in education for these young people?"*

In order to address these research questions and following the overall rationale and methodology outlined above, three studies were carried out. Please see Appendix 1.1 - 'Overview of the thesis' for a brief synopsis of each study and the reasons for the structure of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

STUDY ONE – THE PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

As outlined in the literature review, the research reported in this thesis uses a risk and resilience framework to consider the educational attainment of young people in public care, a vulnerable group of young people whom we know from the review of the literature, are underachieving educationally. The research considers the presence of risk and protective factors in the lives of young people in public care within a local authority in the United Kingdom. The educational attainment of these young people will be considered alongside the range of factors which they have experienced in their lives.

This pilot questionnaire study aimed to consider how the information about the young people was to be collected and then analysed and to trial the methodology selected. It included the development of a parallel questionnaire to be completed with social workers and teachers based on the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors (Figure 2). Difficulties were encountered in obtaining an adequate sample of young people and implications for the main study are considered. Due to the amount and nature of the information collected, the discussion section looks in detail at the constraints identified and how the methodology for data collection would need to be modified. Qualitative analysis of the data is included although with such a small sample size, only limited conclusions can be drawn. This initial analysis of the data was helpful in arriving at a better understanding of the nature of the data collected, in clarifying the means of analysis, in making changes to Figure 2 (to produce Figure 3) and also in amending the questionnaires.

A semi structured interview proforma was developed from the risk and resilience framework which was intended to be used alongside the questionnaires. However, it was not possible to gain an interview sample within this study and hence this did not take place.

2.2 Rationale and Aims of Study 1

The aim of the pilot study was to trial the questionnaire procedures for Study 3. It had been intended to pilot the semi-structured interview proforma alongside the questionnaires, but as highlighted earlier this was not possible due to difficulties obtaining access to the young people.

A trial of intended methods was required prior to the main questionnaire study (Study 3) so that issues and constraints could be identified and worked through. Possible constraints which were to be considered included, for example, how consent should be gained, whether the questionnaires provided attainment measures which could then be used to divide the sample into 'educationally successful' and 'less successful', how long the questionnaires would take to complete and whether the methods used would capture the data about the risk and protective factors required. Data collected would be used to trial methods of analysis and to establish how some of the factors could be scored, for example, 'planfulness and aspirations'. This trial of procedures was to be carried out by using the methodology for the main questionnaire study with a smaller group of young people.

The initial research questions to be addressed through this research (as outlined at the end of the literature review) and the specific hypotheses arising from the research questions are outlined below. Study 1 would address the same research questions and specific hypotheses as for the main study, but with a smaller sample.

2.2.1 "How do young people in care who are educationally successful in school compare to those who are not on a range of 6 **protective** (3 within-child, 3 environmental) and **risk** factors (3 within-child, 3 environmental)?"

Specific Hypotheses:

2.2.1.1 Young people in care who are educationally successful (i.e. attain at or above the national average on Standardised Attainment Tests (SATs) will have a statistically significantly higher number of protective factors than those who are not.

2.2.1.2 Young people in care who are educationally successful (as above) will have a statistically significantly lower incidence of risk factors than those who are not.

2.2.1.3 Young people in care who are educationally successful (as above) will have a statistically significantly higher ratio of protective to risk factors than those who are not.

2.2.2. "Is it possible to identify how some individual young people in care develop resilience (i.e. are educationally successful) and how the factors in their lives interact with each other in the development of resilience?"

Specific Hypotheses

Environmental protective factors experienced before the young person enters care:

2.2.2.1 Young people in care who are educationally successful (as in 2.2.1.1) were well cared for in terms of adequate housing, nourishment and interest in education.

2.2.2.2 Young people in care who are educationally successful did not have parents with mental health problems.

Environmental protective factors present for the young person in their care placement

2.2.2.3 Young people in care who are educationally successful have an adult interested in their education.

2.2.2.4 Young people in care who are educationally successful have access to books and to a place to do homework

Within-child protective factors

2.2.2.5 Young people in care who are educationally successful show higher levels of self-esteem

2.2.2 .6 Young people in care who are educationally successful show higher levels of internal locus of control.

2.2.2.7 Young people in care who are educationally successful are skilled socially with adults and peers.

2.2.3 "If specific factors or causal mechanisms are identified, do these fall within a specific microsystem for the young person, e.g., home, birth family, school, peers, within-child?"

2.2.3.1 Young people in care with protective factors from within their birth family are more likely to be educationally successful.

2.2.3.2 Young people in care with protective factors from within their care placement are more likely to be educationally successful.

2.2.3.3 Young people in care with protective factors from within their school placement are more likely to be educationally successful.

2.2.3.4 Young people in care with protective factors from within themselves are more likely to be educationally successful.

2.2.4 "Are the identified protective factors predictive of future success in education for these young people?"

Specific Hypotheses

2.2.4.1 It is possible to predict educational achievement in school (i.e. attainment at or above the national average in SATS) on the basis of the presence of the protective factors identified for young people in the pilot study.

2.2.4.2 It is possible to predict educational attainment in school (i.e. attainment at or above the national average in SATS) on the basis of the lack of risk factors identified for young people in the pilot study.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1. Research Design

For the Study 3 it was intended to collect data about three groups of young people spanning the statutory school age range. Once data had been collected, the sample from each age group would be split into 'educationally successful' and 'educationally less successful' on the basis of their SAT's results. Young people who had attained at national average levels for their age group would be deemed to be 'educationally successful' and those who had not would be deemed 'unsuccessful' for the purposes of this study. The presence of risk and protective factors as in Figure 2 would then be compared across these two groups to test the research questions and specific hypotheses arising from the literature review. The groups would be compared within the separate age ranges, (i.e. in year 10, do educationally successful young people have more protective factors than risk factors). In this study, this same research design was used, but with a smaller sample of young people (see 2.3.3)

2.3.2. Statistical Analysis

The two samples (educationally successful and unsuccessful) were compared using a two-sample design and data was analysed using non-parametric statistics for the different factors. This was because the data was ordinal (presence or absence of risk or protective factors) and was not normally distributed. The more cautious approach was therefore felt to be appropriate.

2.3.3. Sample

For the main questionnaire study (Study 3), the year groups 4 (ages 8 - 9 years), 7 (ages 11 - 12 years) and 10 (14 -15 years) were chosen as children within these age groups would have just sat national Standardised Attainment Tests and hence data would be readily available. Groups were chosen across the age range so that the study would provide data from the different years which would therefore be available for analysis by age.

For this pilot questionnaire study, it was decided to focus on the oldest year group, the year 10 students (aged 14 -15 years). This was so that on follow-up, as part of the main study, information could be collected about their GCSE attainment results and comparison could be made to see whether any of the factors identified in the pilot study would be seen to have any predictive validity for attainment at GCSE. It was decided that one child from the other two age groups would be included so that the methods could be trialled with the younger age groups. This was considered to be particularly important for the younger children participating in the semi-structured interviews (Study 2) to ensure that the questions were appropriate for these younger pupils.

The young people invited to attend were chosen from the list of children and young people in public care in the English shire authority in May 2001. The method used was initially whether the author was acquainted with the child's social worker. It was hoped that if this was the case, the child might be more likely to be involved in the study, through the social worker being more willing to complete the questionnaire and gain consent for participation through recognition of the researchers name and role within the organisation. The initial group of young people identified to participate included four boys and ten girls. This imbalance was because there were substantially more girls in the possible year 10 group, than boys. All of the young people were white British.

2.3.4. Measures

Parallel versions of the same questionnaire were designed for the study by the researcher which collected information about the presence of risk and protective factors in the young peoples lives (as in Figure 2). Questionnaire A was designed to be completed by the young person's social worker and Questionnaire B by a teacher who knew the young person well (for example their Year Head, Form Tutor or classteacher for primary aged pupils). Some questions were asked in both questionnaires, whereas some reflected the more specialist role and areas of knowledge which the different practitioners could offer about the young person. For example, Questionnaire A (for social workers) asked about the young person's care placements and Questionnaire B asked for details of the young person's school attainments and participation (see Appendix 2.3 and 2.5).

2.3.4.1. Questionnaire A

This questionnaire was designed to be completed by the social worker for the young person participating in the study, (see Appendix 2.2: Introduction to Questionnaire A and 2.3: Questionnaire A). It could also be completed by a key worker in a residential home. The questionnaire consisted of five main sections and twenty-two questions. Section 1 covered Background Information about the participant, Section 2, Self-Esteem, Section 3 Risk and Protective factors, Section 4 Social Relationships and Section 5 Miscellaneous Questions.

2.3.4.2. Questionnaire B

This questionnaire was designed to be completed by a teacher for the young person participating in the study, (see Appendix 2.4: Introduction to Questionnaire B and 2.5: Questionnaire B). The questionnaire consisted of five main sections and 17 questions. Section 1 covered Background Information about the participant, including their educational attainment, Section 2 Special Support in School, Section 3, Self-Esteem, Section 4 Social Relationships and Section 5 Miscellaneous Questions.

2.3.5. Procedure

Questionnaire A and consent forms were sent out to the social workers identified by social services for the young people in May 2001. These were sent with a covering letter (see Appendix 2.6). For young people accommodated by the local authority, the consent form asked the social worker to consult with the birth parents about involvement. For young people subject to a full care order, consent would be accepted from the social worker on behalf of social services. The social workers were asked to talk to the young people themselves about involvement in the study.

Once consent was received from the social worker, Questionnaire B was sent out to the designated teacher for the school which the young person was attending, again with a covering letter (see Appendix 2.7).

The researcher contacted every social worker to follow-up consent forms not received, by email and by telephone. Time lines were extended until Autumn 2001

to give social workers a chance to complete the questionnaires given that some may have had summer holidays.

2.3.5.1 Questionnaire Analysis

Those questionnaires received were analysed for the risk and protective factors in the framework in Figure 2. Protective factors were rated as [+1] if present and [0] if absent and risk factors were rated as [-1] if present or [0] if absent. See Appendix 2.8 for a summary and key to the ratings used. Factors such as 'plans and aspirations' were scored as present or not, (i.e. if the young person expressed a plan for the future, it was scored as present). No judgements were made as to the value or quality of the plan. 'Interested adult' and 'support for education in the care environment' were scored in the same way. Social orientation was scored as being a risk factor if the participants' average scores on peer relationships was 3 out of 8 or less (scored by social workers and designated teachers on a Likert-type rating scale of 1 to 8 in school, in outside school activities and in the care placement). Where scores on any factor were gained in more than one way, for example a score was given for social skills by a teacher and by a social worker, then the scores were averaged before it was decided whether it would rate as a factor or not. The same process was used for self-esteem, (i.e. an average score of 3 or below out of 8 was scored as the risk factor being present [-1]).

2.3.5.2 Inter-rater reliability of the questionnaires

An inter-rater reliability of the rating of the presence of risk and protective factors from the completed questionnaires was undertaken. It was calculated by two raters analysing the same completed questionnaires as follows. Each rater had a copy of the completed social worker and teacher questionnaires for a young person and a copy of the key to the risk and protective factors (Appendix 2.8). Each factor in the key was rated as present or absent in the completed questionnaire by each rater referring to the specific questionnaire questions as laid out in the key. For example, for 'Plans and aspirations' the rater would look at the question in the questionnaire which asks what plans and hopes the young person has for the future and then decides (as laid out in the table) whether the answer given by the social worker fits the criteria that the young person has a

clear plan with some research / reasoning behind it. If it does then the protective factor is scored as present [+1]. If not, then it is scored as absent [0]. The percentage agreement between the two raters was then calculated such that if the raters gave the same rating on 18 out of the 20 risk and protective factors, the inter-rater reliability score given was 90%. This process was completed on two sets of questionnaires within study 1 and the percentage of factors on which the two raters agreed was 94.1%.

2.4 Results

2.4.1 Return rate of the questionnaires

In Study 1, out of 14 consent forms and 14 Questionnaire A's sent out to social workers, only four were returned. A number of reasons for this occurred and they are set out for each young person in Table A (See Appendix 2.9).

There was therefore a lack of feedback and a limited return of the questionnaires. In some cases, there was no response at all from the social worker, in others the social worker made a judgement that participation was not appropriate, in some cases the situation meant that involvement was not possible (e.g., moving out of care) and in other cases the young person or their family made the decision that involvement was not appropriate. Therefore in order to access a sample of young people in care, a number of 'barriers' needed to be negotiated to gain access. Rather than just requiring parental consent and consent of the young person, consent and commitment was also required from the social worker. Added to this, the complexity of the situation within which many of these young people found themselves, involved with a large number of professionals and attending meetings, this meant that gaining access to them locationally and timewise was difficult.

The lack of feedback and return of the questionnaires will be considered in more detail in the discussion of Study 1 and implications for Studies 2 and 3 will be highlighted. In analysing the questionnaires returned, the numbers were too small for statistical analyses. The results were therefore considered through a content analysis of the individual case histories of the young people involved and in terms of the patterns of factors reported by the social workers and teachers. The data

collected is presented in Tables C - E (please see Appendix 2.11) and is summarised below.

2.4.2. Individual Case Histories and Themes Arising

Data was gathered about four different young people – all within the older age group, all young women and all white British. Appendix 2.11, Table C summarises the background information collected about these young people. Appendix 2.11, Table D summarises information gathered about their peer relationships and support within their care placement and Appendix 2.11 Table E summarises the educational information collected. The data obtained will now be discussed.

2.4.2.1. Background Information

Two of the participants (Carla and Tracy) had been accommodated within the previous year, at the request of their mothers as they were perceived to be “beyond parental control” (as described by the social worker). These participants were both in contact with members of their birth families and both had a close relationship with a key worker in their children’s home. Parental divorce was relevant to both cases within their pre-care environments, sexual abuse being a factor in one case and family illness in another.

The other two participants (Kerry and Niamh) were subject to care orders and had been placed in care in both cases because of neglect and parental lack of ability to care. One of these young women was living back with her mother in the capacity of young carer and the other was living with a permanent foster carer. Again, both of these participants had some contact with their birth families and the foster carer played an important role in the life of Niamh. In each of these cases, a wider range of risk factors appear to be present in their birth families and so in their pre-care experiences, including, lack of parental education and interest in education, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, parental divorce and in one case, Kerry, family illness and mental illness. The relevance of these factors tended to be scored more highly for Kerry and Niamh than for Carla and Tracy. The latter two young women had been taken into care at younger ages than the former – at 7 and 12 years in comparison to 14 and 15 years. These initial results would appear to suggest that Kerry and Niamh entered care for different reasons to

Carla and Tracy and were subject to more risk factors in their pre-care experience within their birth families.

2.4.2.2. Friendships and support within the care placement

The social workers and teachers were asked to rate peer relationships on a Likert-type scale of one to eight, where one was described as “not at all well. There are lots of problems and I am very concerned” and eight was described as “very well, he/she has lots of real friends, they go out of their way for each other, play well together and I am not at all concerned about this area”. The scores fell between 3 and 7 with Niamh (in permanent foster care and attending school) having the highest scores, suggesting that she had the most successful relationships.

Neither of the two participants accommodated (beyond parental control) had friends from outside the care system who were successful in education, although the other two participants did. This may have been because the latter two (Kerry and Niamh) were still successfully attending school. A range of aspirations were expressed, although mostly these were short-lived – finding a job for the summer, finishing coursework. All of the participants had somewhere quiet to do homework and access to a computer and three out of the four, to books. Only one of the four had a time slot identified for completing homework and this was the young woman attending the local grammar school (Niamh).

2.4.2.3. Educational information

Carla and Tracy were both being supported by a Pupil Referral Unit, one having been permanently excluded from her secondary school and the other not attending her secondary school. Kerry, living at home, was attending her local secondary school. Niamh, living with a permanent foster carer was attending her local grammar school. All of the participants had Personal Education Plans, although only one of the participants had received any kind of additional learning support (other than alternative placements) and this was Niamh in the selective school. Little educational data was yielded by the questionnaires, apart from the selective school where subject by subject internal school exam results were provided. One of the Pupil Referral Units was able to provide reading and spelling ages although the national curriculum data was not available. Only one of the

participants had been excluded from school. All of the participants had an adult interested in their education identified, and someone to attend parents' evenings.

The self-esteem ratings were scored again on a Likert-type scale of one to eight. Unfortunately, the lack of data makes any analysis impossible.

2.4.3 The Research Questions

The risk and protective factors present are now considered in relation to the research questions and the risk and resilience framework introduced in the literature review (see Figure 2).

2.4.3.1. "How do young people in public care who are educationally successful in school compare to those who are not on a range of 6 protective factors (3 within-child, 3 environmental) and risk factors (3 within-child, 3 environmental)?"

Unfortunately the lack of educational data fed back about the participants and the small size of the sample, meant that it was not possible to divide the sample into two groups based on educational success. However, the pilot study provided an opportunity to look at the data collected in terms of protective and risk factors and to apply the suggested framework.

Using the scores assigned in Table B (Appendix 2.10), the factors were then summarised in terms of the total score of protective factors and risk factors for each participant and the ratio of these for each participant.

Table1: Total score of risk and protective factors present for each participant

| Participant | Protective factors | | | Risk factors | | | Ratio |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------|--------------|---------------|-------|-------|
| | Within-Child | Environment | Total | Within-Child | Environmental | Total | |
| Carla | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1:1 |
| Tracy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3:2 |
| Kerry | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4:3 |
| Niamh | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4:0 |

These results suggest that participant Niamh had the most protective factors and the least risk factors as measured by Questionnaires A and B. However, Niamh's pre-care experience appears to have included more risks than those of participants Carla and Tracy (see Appendix 2.11, Table C and Table 2), although they were not necessarily measured by this study.

2.4.3.2. "Is it possible to identify how some individual young people develop resilience (i.e. educational success) and how the factors in their lives interact with each other in the development of resilience?"

Although not enough data was collected to make detailed analysis about any one case possible, the risk factors identified in the participants' birth families was considered more fully.

Risk Factors:

The social workers were asked to rate the presence of the following in the young person's birth home environment as far as was possible: 1 is not at all relevant, 3 is 'may have had some relevance', 6 is very relevant and 8 is 'a crucial issue for the family'.

Table 2 describes where factors were scored as relevant. Numbers refer to the number of participants where the factor was scored as relevant (i.e. between 1 and 4). Initials in square brackets are used to indicate the participants, i.e. C for Carla, T for Tracy, K for Kerry and N for Niamh.

Table 2: Risk factors scored by the social workers as present in the participants' birth families

| Factor | 1 not relevant | 2 | 3 some relevance | 4 | 5 | 6 very relevant | 7 | 8 crucial issue |
|--|----------------------|-------|------------------------|---|-------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Lack of parental education (e.g., didn't complete school, no qualifications) | 2 [CT] | | 2 [KN] | | | | | |
| Lack of parental interest in education | 1 [C] | 1 [T] | 1[K] | | | 1[N] | | |
| Alcohol abuse | 4 [CTKN] | | | | | | | |
| Drug abuse | 4 [CTKN] | | | | | | | |
| Parental mental illness | 3 [CTN] | | | | | 1[K] | | |
| Parental divorce | | | 1 [T] | | 1 [C] | 2 [KN] | | |
| Family illness | 2 [CN] | | 1 [T] | | | 1 [K] | | |
| Bereavement | 3 [CTN] | | | | | 1 [K] | | |
| Sexual abuse | 1 [T] | 1[C] | | | | | | 2 [KN] |
| Physical abuse | 4 [CTKN] | | | | | | | |
| Emotional abuse | 2 [CT] | | | | | 2 [KN] | | |
| Other | | | | | | | | |

As highlighted in Table 2, Kerry and Niamh had experienced more risk factors in their birth families including divorce, sexual and emotional abuse and for Kerry, family illness, bereavement and parental mental illness. All four participants had experienced divorce within their birth families.

Kerry and Niamh, as highlighted earlier, showed different patterns from Carla and Tracy, having been taken into care for different reasons, having more risk factors in their pre-care experiences and both still attending regular schooling, whereas Carla and Tracy were both taken into care because of their own behaviour – “being beyond parental control” – and neither were attending school. It may be

interesting in the main study to consider whether there are subsets of children in public care who show different patterns of experiences and different levels of risk for failure.

2.4.3.3. "If specific factors or causal mechanisms are identified, do these fall within a specific microsystem for the child, (e.g. home, birth family, school, peers group or within-child)?"

2.4.3.4. "Are there identified protective factors predictive of future success in education for these young people?"

Without more detailed information it was not possible to address these research questions within the constraints of Study 1 (the pilot study).

2.5 Discussion

Although it was not possible to trial the statistical analysis or to draw valid or reliable conclusions from Study 1 due to the lack of data collected, this pilot study has raised some interesting issues in terms of challenges encountered in carrying out research with children in care. It provided an opportunity to begin to explore the information in terms of risk and protective factors.

Some points to be considered in the main study have arisen from this very small sample. The possible existence of subsets of children in care and whether the reason for being taken into care is more closely tied up with the success achieved than had previously been considered is one which would be worth exploring more fully in Study 3. That so little educational data is available for these young people, despite their having Personal Education Plans and with the growing pressure on Local Authorities to emphasise and track the attainment of this group of children is noted. The pilot study has lead to a re-consideration of the original framework of risk and protective factors (see Figure 2). Although information was collected about a wide range of risk factors, these were not included within the framework and so are not addressed within the research questions. The research questions could be more clearly addressed if the framework included all of the factors and split them into three different environments – pre-care, care placement and school / education. Additional pre-care factors could then be added to the framework

which might lend a greater level of flexibility to the research. This might support the analysis of factors for participants such as Niamh where she experienced more risk factors in her pre-care experience. A new framework was therefore devised and is outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Final Framework of Risk and Protective Factors

| | | <u>Protective Factor</u> | <u>Risk Factor</u> |
|---------------------|----------|--|---|
| Within-Child | | Internal locus of control (Jackson & Martin, 1998) Learning to read fluently and early (Jackson & Martin, 1998) Planfulness and aspiration (Garmezy, 1997) | Negative social orientation (Masten & Garmezy, 1985) Behaviour difficulties Low self-esteem (Masten & Garmezy, 1985) |
| Environment | Pre-care | Parental interest and support for education (Osborne, 1990; Pilling, 1990) Good parental care (Aldgate et al, 1992) | Parent with mental health problems (Jackson & Martin, 1998) Drug or alcohol abuse within the family Child maltreatment within the family (Jackson & Martin, 1998) |
| | Care | Successful friends who are not in care (Jackson & Martin, 1998) Interest and support for learning in the care environment (Jackson & Martin, 1998) | High number of placements (Jackson & Martin, 1998) Being in residential care rather than foster care |
| | School | An adult in school who the young person can talk to (Catterall, 1998) Achievements, academic, sporting or in the arts (Catterall, 1998) | Exclusion from school Poor attendance (Jackson, 1994) |

The revised framework will be used in Studies 2 and 3 to analyse the data and to address the newly re-framed research questions as detailed in Study 3 (4.2 Rationale and Aims of Study 3).

The final research question - "*Are the identified protective factors predictive of future success in education for these young people?*" - was not addressed any further in the research. Without an initial sample it was impossible to follow-up any young people in Study 3 to gain a view about the predictive validity of any factors identified in the initial sample.

2.5.1. Limitations of Study One

2.5.1.1 Obtaining a sample

The most obvious difficulty encountered in Study 1 was gaining a large enough sample. Some of the issues contributing to this are highlighted below:

2.5.1.1.1 The transient nature of the population.

Young people in public care may move in and out of care and between care and school placements which means that they can be 'lost' to a study very quickly even though they may have agreed to participate. Moves may be local but may be across county and county borders. Busy social workers organising a move, particularly in an emergency placement situation with care and school places to find and sort out are unlikely to prioritise communicating about such a move with a researcher. Reducing this lack of continuity in placements is the focus of a target which Local Authorities are required to address.

2.5.1.1.2 The age ranges

The age ranges chosen may have added to the difficulty of gaining a sample. In the case of the younger participants they were preparing to transfer between phases of schooling, either between infant and junior or between junior and secondary. This heightened the concerns of the social workers about including them in the study, particularly as the forms were sent out in the summer term prior to transfer

2.5.1.1.3 Out-county placements

Some of the young people in care were placed out county which made them more difficult to access. Communication, as well as physical access, is more difficult in this situation as the young people are likely to have a social worker in the home authority (i.e. where they were taken into care), but will be receiving schooling and the provision of other services from another Authority.

2.5.1.1.4 Separation of care and school

Some of the young people in care felt strongly about wanting to keep their care and school placements completely separate and so were wary of working with the researcher. This was more of an issue in relation to the researcher trying to gain a sample to pilot the semi-structured interviews than for the questionnaires. It could be partially addressed through the researcher making it clearer to the young people how information would be used and how it would be anonymised.

2.5.1.1.5 The number of professionals involved

Many of the young people were involved with a large number of other professionals, for example, tutors, youth workers, Connexions personal advisers, members of the youth offending team, the police, the child guidance clinics, clinical psychologists and the Children's Rights Officer. They may be called for additional assessments to contribute to court cases or to their Looked After Children (Statutory) reviews. This may make it difficult to arrange to meet with the young people themselves and can raise concern with the adults supporting them and giving consent who feel that they "have enough on their plates" without being involved in something additional.

2.5.1.1.6 Birth family consent

Birth families, where involved in giving consent, may not want old issues, particularly to do with why the young person is in care, revisited, whether through wanting to protect the young person or themselves. This is especially true where they do not have a good relationship with the social services and / or with education.

2.5.1.1.7 The workload of social workers.

Concerns were raised about the timing of the work in regard to the local government reorganisation resulting in restructuring of the social services. There were difficulties in recruiting staff to work across the Authority within the Looked After Children Teams. A social worker told me that there were many unallocated cases within the team and that the team managers were having to carry these. Cases were not moving as workers did not have time to deal with them and the workers were becoming annoyed. It was therefore understandable that with statutory work not being completed that an optional piece of work such as filling in a research questionnaire would not be a priority. It was felt by the social worker that the re-organisation was likely to lead to more difficulties as there was to be a smaller and more specialist team supporting looked after children and hence for Studies 2 and 3 a smaller number of social workers were likely to be involved. Although this could be expected to make communication easier, it would also mean fewer social workers completing questionnaires.

2.5.1.2 Gaining consent

Gaining consent worked reasonably well for the young people in Study 1, although the two young people the researcher spoke to directly had not had the opportunity to discuss the research with their social worker or with the key worker in the children's home who was not aware of the research. Again, the issues here appear to be to do with the workload of social workers and the time that they find to complete 'another' task.

2.5.1.3 The questionnaires

The questionnaires A and B which were completed contained some useful information for the research. There were areas where they did not provide the information required, for example when and why the young person was first taken into care, when the young person had been taken into care 'this time' and how well the young person coped with being in care. These areas were included in the Questionnaires for Study 3. The social worker was also asked to consider and include any particular factors which helped them to cope and any which might have hindered them in coping.

The very low rate of return made the researcher wonder whether the questionnaires were too long and too complex to complete. The researcher had invited feedback on the front of the questionnaires about the process and did talk to one of the social workers on the telephone about the procedure. The individual social worker had felt that the questionnaire itself was clear and comparatively easy to fill in, but he had not completed the questionnaire himself because of the situation of the particular young person who he had been asked to fill in the questionnaire about. This led the researcher to focus on the sampling procedure rather than reviewing the design of the actual questionnaire. In hindsight, it would have been valuable to talk to more of the social workers including those who had completed the questionnaires and to have reviewed the actual questionnaire design prior to Study 3.

2.6 Implications for Studies 2 and 3

With the difficulty of gaining an adequate research sample, consideration was given to sending out the questionnaires for all young people in public care in the authority, between the year groups of 3 to 10. A larger sample would allow enough questionnaires to be returned so that some statistical analysis could occur. However, the new organisational structure which was put into place in social services, although simplifying the communication process in terms of the researcher needing to communicate with fewer team members, raised concerns. With fewer social workers supporting these young people there might be too much work for the social workers to complete in filling out the questionnaires. This would be a particular issue as many of the workers were from agencies and so were working on temporary contracts.

The researcher therefore followed up the study through meeting with the new services manager for children in public care to discuss ways forward for collecting the data. It was decided that the researcher's attendance at team meetings with time to look at the questionnaires with the social workers and to discuss how best to move forward would be effective. The social workers could then suggest young people, whom they knew well who might be interested in participating in the study. The possibility of time being set aside in those meetings to complete the questionnaires or times when the researcher could sit down with individual social

workers to complete the questionnaires might prove valuable. The services manager offered full support in terms of identifying children and social workers to participate and hence it was decided to continue with the smaller sample as first designed, but with clearer support for eliciting completed questionnaires.

Study 1 had not only suggested changes in the Framework for analysing the risk and protective factors (see Figure 3) and in the research questions, but also highlighted areas where Questionnaires A and B did not provide the information required. The questionnaires were therefore revisited prior to the main study, (see Study 3 and Appendices 4.3 and 4.4).

Where the information gained about a particular young person was not complete, the main study could also include a file search (where permission was gained) so that information held in social services files could be added to that gained from Questionnaires C and D. It was hoped that further educational data would be increasingly available from the young people's Personal Education Plans as the specialist support team within the authority supporting these young people had more access to this data themselves and were willing to share it with this study.

It was recognised that no information had been gained through Study 1 about two of the within-child factors within the Framework (see Figure 2). These were 'Behaviour difficulties' (a risk factor) and 'Internal Locus of Control' (a protective factor). In Study 3 the social workers and teachers were therefore asked to complete the Rutter Behaviour Rating Scales and the young people were asked to complete a Locus of Control Rating Scale. Details of these measures can be found within Study 3.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDY TWO – THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Study 2 was an interview study which aimed to look at the experiences of a small number of young people in more detail to see if it was possible to begin to look at the interaction between risk and protective factors following the revised framework described in Chapter 2 (Figure 3) and to identify themes. The semi-structured interview proforma was developed based on the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors (Figure 3) and was completed with a small sample of young people in public care, the interviews being recorded and transcribed.

The interview transcripts were then analysed using two methods. Firstly, a simple quantitative counting approach was undertaken, a form of content-analysis, so that data could be extracted about risk and protective factors present in the young people's lives. This data has not been discussed in detail in Study 2, but will form part of Study 3. The transcripts were then analysed qualitatively. They were dissected, using a template analysis type approach, into answers to specific questions across the participants, (i.e. answers to question 1 from all of the participants were analysed, then answers to question 2 and so on). Themes were identified and are discussed.

3.2 Rationale and Aims of Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to look in more depth at the interactions occurring between risk and protective factors in young people in care's lives, as well as collecting more information which could contribute to Study 3.

Research interviews were chosen as a means of meeting with young people to talk about their experiences and how they felt about them which would contribute a different level of information to the research than that gained from Studies 1 and 3. As described by Kvale (1996) the interviews were intended as "attempts to understand the world from the subject's points of view – to unfold the meaning of people's experiences", (p. 1). They were viewed as "professional conversations

based on the conversations of daily life" (Kvale, 1996, p. 5-6). The interviews were based on the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors (Figure 3) put forward at the end of Study 1 and were designed to contribute to the understanding around the following two research questions:

3.2.1 "Is it possible to identify how some individual young people develop resilience (i.e. educational success) and how the factors in their lives interact with each other in the development of resilience?"

3.2.2 "If specific factors or causal mechanisms are identified, do these fall within a specific microsystem for the child, (e.g., home, birth family, school, peers, within-child)?"

Please refer to 4.2.1 (Chapter 4) for the specific hypotheses put forward under these research questions.

The information gained from Study 2 was analysed both quantitatively, using content-analysis to give an overview of the data and a context in which more in-depth analysis could take place, and qualitatively. Qualitative analysis was used to look at the meanings and interactions within the conversations held in the interviews. A semi-structured format was used with probes and prompts to elicit more detail as required. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Silverman (1999), in addressing the qualitative versus quantitative analysis debate concludes that "there are no principled grounds to be either quantitative or qualitative in approach. It all depends on what you are trying to do. Instead, often one will want to combine both approaches" (p.22). He goes on to describe a study by Glassner and Loughlin (1987) where interviews took place to look at adolescents' perceptions of drugs and drug use. Structured interviews were used with pre-tested questions, on a small but randomly selected sample and data analysis was used, but alongside open questions with long in-depth interviews based on a one-year observation study. Transcripts were coded to give topics, ways of talking, themes, events and actors and were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Similarly, Silverman (1984) in a study of oncology clinics, constructed coding forms which enabled crude measures to be taken from the data which could be counted and analysed statistically alongside qualitative interviews, behavioural and observational data and information about the different settings within which the patients had been seen. Silverman (1984) emphasises the role of simple counting techniques in giving overviews of qualitative data often lost in more in-depth qualitative analysis. He concludes that they can be used to give a 'reality check' to 'impressions' gained from the data.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Research design - using research interviews

It was decided to use research interviews to engage more fully with young people's experiences, to begin to explore their beliefs and perceptions. Before addressing procedural issues encountered within the current study, an overview of some of the main factors to be addressed in using research interviews will be given.

Baker (1982) highlighted two main issues. The first of these is the relationship between the interviewees' account of the world and the actual world which they describe, (i.e. are interviewees' accounts a reflection of the truth?) In the current study, interview data was used to contribute to the quantitative study and some researchers could have issues with this use of interview data. Generally, qualitative research tends to see interview accounts as authentic insights into people's experiences in contrast to the approach taken by quantitative practitioners whereby research involves collecting 'facts' about the world, which are valid and reliable. This dichotomy could raise philosophical difficulties for the combination of the two approaches in terms of analysing the interview data.

The second main issue highlighted by Baker (1982) is that of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Denzin (1970) emphasises six factors which are discussed below which need to be taken into account in regard to that relationship in designing open-ended interviews. Although a semi-structured proforma was used in Study 2, many of the same issues are pertinent and are reviewed here.

- 1) The interviewer and interviewee have different interactional roles based on the interviewer having control over the direction and pace of the interview unless they allow or give the interviewee the space to do so.
- 2) Problems of self-presentation influencing what is said and how either party behave, especially at the start of an interview.
- 3) The relationship is likely to be fleeting and the interviewee is unlikely to feel commitment and so may feel free to make things up or say what they feel is expected of them.
- 4) It is difficult for the interviewer to penetrate the interviewee's private world of their own experience unless the interviewee wants them to do so. Where an interviewee does want to investigate their 'inner world' this can lead to difficulties for the research interviewer where a therapeutic interview may be engaged upon with inherent dangers of the interviewee then requiring ongoing support to address emotional needs brought out by the interview.
- 5) There can be a perceived power or status imbalance, for example with a professional interviewing a young person or where an adult has given consent for a young person to take part without their individual consent.
- 6) The context of the interview is important, including where it takes place.

Kvale (1996) highlights the skills of the interviewer and the craftsmanship of conducting skilled research interviews. The importance of active listening, respect and being able to analyse whilst interviewing are all highlighted. However, the importance of the relationship between the two protagonists, interviewee and interviewer should be considered in term of its effect on the information collected and any inherent bias which results. Cicourel (1974) suggests not seeing any difficulties as obstacles but accepting them as illustrating the basic properties of social interaction which will be inherent in any open-ended interview situation.

3.3.2 Kvale's seven stages of interviewing – the measures and procedures used and the sample

Kvale (1996) highlights that there are no standard techniques for research interviews although he goes on to provide a seven staged model within which choices, based on reflective decision-making, methodological options, resources and topic, can be made.

The approach is more formal and more linear than the grounded theory approach of Strauss and Corbin (1990). It relies on consideration of the purposes of the research and research questions being laid down at the beginning of the study based on a review of the literature and being used as a basis for the design of the interview study. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach is far more open-ended and involves the 'theory' being developed as interviewing, coding and analysing proceed. The former approach was chosen given the tight deadline within which data analysis needed to occur and the fact that initial hypotheses and research questions had already been formulated through the literature review and the questionnaire studies.

The seven stages and their consideration with respect to this study are outlined below:

3.3.2.1 Thematising

The purpose of the study, describing the topic and formulating the research questions – the why and what of the study, were described in the literature review and the specific research questions relating to this study and its purpose were addressed in the introduction.

3.3.2.2 Defining – the sample, measures and procedures

Initially it had been planned that the researcher would interview young people who had volunteered after discussion with their social workers. However because of difficulties in gaining participants through Study 1 and then the additional constraint of young people not wanting to meet the researcher face-to-face, the researcher contacted the children rights' officer within the authority who worked directly with young people. He discussed the research with his drama group sharing a letter which the researcher had produced with them and a leaflet about the research (see Appendix 3.1). All of these young people volunteered to take part and the children's rights officer then provided the researcher with names and telephone numbers so that the young people could be contacted individually. The sample eventually consisted of 9 young people, four girls and five boys. Seven of the young people were from the drama group and two were recruited through Study 3. The sample is therefore likely to be highly unrepresentative of children in

care more generally as a majority of the young people had already participated in an external group which involved performing and making their views known. The other two young people were nominated by their social workers and were therefore likely to be young people who the social workers felt might be willing to meet with me and who were in successful school placements, making them perceived 'good participants'. Further discussion about the sample will occur below.

Interviews were held with the young people where they felt most comfortable, but with consideration that the environment should be quiet enough for private interviews to be held and for tape recordings to be successfully taken. It was important that the young person and the interviewer felt safe and so it was ensured that a trusted adult was available and close at hand in all cases. For some of the young people, they chose that the researcher should contact the school to arrange a time to see them on school property. For others, they felt that they wanted to keep school and home separate and they were interviewed at home, one in his foster placement (with foster carer in the next room) and three others, in their children's homes. The different environments within which the interviews were conducted may have influenced the interviews. The interviews carried out at home may have felt less formal to the young people although the same procedure was used in all cases. One young woman was not attending school directly as she was attending a training institution and was living within sheltered accommodation (independent living). She was therefore seen at home, with her carer directly available and within hearing distance.

In all cases, the researcher introduced herself and the research, discussed confidentiality and the recording of the interviews and asked the young people to sign a consent form for participation, (see Appendix 3.2). The interview proforma was then followed, with prompts and probes being used as necessary (see Appendix 3.3). At the end of the interview the young person was asked whether they had any questions and whether they felt that there was anything which they had not been asked which they had expected to be asked. Finally, they were asked to complete a Locus of Control Measure which then contributed to Study 3 (see Appendix 4.7). Apart from having been completed at the end of the interview, this measure does not form part of Study 2 and so is not described or discussed

here. Please see Study 3 for a description of the measure used and for a discussion of the results obtained.

3.3.2.3 Interviewing – The Measure

An interview guide was developed which consisted of 6 phases (see Appendix 3.3). It was developed based on the risk and resilience framework (see Figure 3) and based on the research questions derived from the literature review.

Phase one: Welcome, establishing rapport, clarification of the purpose of the interview, the time available and of confidentiality. Signing of the Consent Form.

Phase two consisted of three questions asking the participants about their family and school background, including who they had lived with, which schools they had attended and why they were in care.

Phase three consisted of questions about school. The questions asked the participant about when they learned to read, how they felt about school, who helped them with schoolwork, and how school and their social worker kept in contact.

Phase four asked questions about where the participant was living in care at that time. It asked about support for their education at home, including whether there was a quiet place to do homework, whether there were books and a computer which could help and whether anyone at home, from the participants birth family or the participant's social worker knew how they were getting on at school.

Phase 5 asked the participants about their 'dreams' and 'aspirations', about where they might see themselves when they were 25 years old and where other important people might see them, for example, their teacher, carer, social worker, Mum, Dad or siblings.

Phase 6 asked the participants about how well they felt they had coped with being in care and asked them what had helped and what might have hindered them in coping.

Phase 7 was a final phase including thankyou's and goodbyes. The participant was given the opportunity to tell or ask anything further before the end of the interview.

A mix of questions was used, including lots of 'why', 'what' and 'how' questions to elicit spontaneous descriptions of occurrences rather than speculative explanations of happenings. Introductory questions and follow-up questions were

designed with probing questions, interpreting and specifying questions being used spontaneously as the need arose within the interviews. Interviews were carried out with 9 young people although one was withdrawn – see later under ethical considerations for discussion. The questions were not pre-tested because of the difficulty gaining the sample. However, after the first two interviews it was not felt that changes were required.

3.3.2.4 Transcribing

The interviewer transcribed one of the interviews from tape and one from notes (where recording had failed). An administrative colleague typed the remainder of the transcripts although the interviewer then re-read the transcripts whilst listening to the tapes and checking with notes taken at the time of the interview, to fill in gaps, to format the text and to check for sense and accuracy.

3.3.2.5 Analysis

The analysis was carried out through categorising the transcripts, initially through answers to particular questions. Quantitative counting methods were used to summarise answers for each young person to contribute to Study 3. This involved a content-analysis type approach, picking out whether specific risk and protective factors were present for each young person. Protective factors were rated as [+1] if present and [0] if absent and risk factors were rated as [-1] if present or [0] if absent. See Appendix 2.8 for a summary and key to the ratings used. Factors such as 'plans and aspirations' were scored as present or not, (i.e. if the young person expressed a plan for the future, it was scored as present). No judgements were made as to the value or quality of the plan. 'Interested adult' and 'support for education in the care environment' were scored in the same way. This data is not discussed further in Study 2, but contributes to Study 3.

More in-depth categorisation and analysis of themes was then carried out through dissecting all of the scripts into responses to particular questions and placing them in a coloured and labelled folder (i.e. each young person's answer to Question 1 was placed in a red folder labelled 'Question 1' and so on). The segments of script in each folder were then re-read and themes were identified and developed. The segments relating to these themes were then placed into an

envelope marked with the theme, (e.g., 'Parental Absence') and new envelopes with new themes were made up as necessary. The envelopes for these themes were then kept within the folder for the question under which they had been identified.

Each young person's transcript was printed on different coloured paper and all lines were numbered so that any segment or quote could be linked directly back to the original transcript and could then be listened to again on the tape if necessary. Finally, the themes were taken out of the folders and were reviewed before being grouped so that the results could be written up.

3.3.2.6 Verification

Generalisability

The data has very limited generalisability due to the probable unrepresentativeness of the sample and the small size of the sample. It is important that this should be taken into account when drawing conclusions from the data, particularly with regard to young people in care as there is a very high level of sample heterogeneity and so a very large sample would be needed for any conclusions to be drawn which relate to the whole population of children in care.

Reliability

Silverman (1999) discussed the usefulness of reliability and validity for qualitative research given the small sample sizes often used and the aim of the research in looking at people's perceptions, views and meanings of their own experiences. The degree of consistency between open-ended interviews where questioning develops depending on the responses given, is obviously likely to be very low. However, reliability can be evidenced by looking at pre-testing of questionnaires, and having two researchers analyse the data and compare the results of analysis and coding. He recommends using a standardised method to prepare transcripts and having group analysis to agree transcripts and to analyse data.

The level to which these were possible within the current study was limited. Pre-testing of the interview questions was not completed due to time and sample limitations although it would have been possible to withdraw the first two interviews and use these as pre-testing if that had been felt to be necessary. Notes were kept about the interviews as these proceeded and a colleague did look at the data with the researcher once analysis had been initiated. Transcripts were standardised to some extent, scripts were typed up verbatim although a few interviewer “uh-huh” and “umm” responses may have been missed. Some standard symbols were followed although those for intonation, overlapping conversation and brief pauses were not included. These were excluded purely from the pragmatic point of view of time and the cost of producing the transcripts. Where more detail was required, the tapes were re-listened to so that the detail could be added.

Validity

Silverman (1999) reflects on the issue of validity and highlights the usefulness of considering the impact of the researcher on the setting, the values of the researcher and the truth-status of the respondent's account. Methods of looking at the latter are to triangulate evidence with other forms of data, (e.g., participant observation) and to take the findings back to the interviewees, ‘respondent validation’. Silverman does suggest that it may be more pragmatic to focus on hypothesis testing of any ideas generated and to use simple counting procedures to validate data.

3.3.2.7 Reporting

In this case, reporting is through the submission of a formal thesis, possible submission of a professional article for publication, reporting back to the Local Authority and to the participants of the study – both the young people and the professionals, most probably through focus groups or through written material.

3.3.3 Ethical considerations in the current study

Psychologists undertaking research interviews need to have due regard to messages from research as well as to professional Codes of Conduct and ethical

codes (British Psychological Society, 2000). Kvale (1996) suggests reviewing the ethical considerations at the seven stages of interviewing reviewed above, (i.e. through the stages of thematising, defining, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting). Some ethical considerations have been alluded to in the account of these stages for Study 2, but consideration will be given now in more detail to those of informed consent, confidentiality and consequences.

3.3.3.1 Informed consent

In the interview study, the option of taking part was discussed with young people by their social workers or by the children's rights officer. The researcher had prepared a leaflet which was available to be given and discussed with the young people (see Appendix 3.1). This explained a little about the research in terms of what was involved and confidentiality, it gave the researcher's contact details and explained that the young people would gain feedback, probably in a group, from the research. It said that the young people would gain a 'small gift' to thank them for taking part. This latter fact was not then stressed in further discussions so that the young people were not only motivated to take part for this reason when it was felt that problems could occur. It was highlighted that being involved in the research would give them the chance to express their views and to have them represented locally and nationally as well as being involved in something which was trying to make things better for other young people in care.

Where young people then expressed interest, their social workers were informed and were asked to either give consent or to explore with those with parental responsibility for the young people whether consent would be given depending on the legal status of the young people in relation to their care. This did rely on the social workers being able to explain the research to those other adults which may, on reflection, have resulted in procedures not being as thorough as they could have been. When the researcher then met with the young people, after general chat to establish rapport, the research was discussed, including the purposes of the research, the different studies being undertaken and risks about what could happen for the young person, (i.e. that just talking or thinking about their experiences could raise issues for them which they might then want to talk to someone about). In all cases, the researcher checked that they had someone with

whom they felt that could talk later if they needed, and if in school, checked which lessons they were attending next and whether they would feel supported.

At the beginning of the interview, it was clarified that they could withdraw at any stage or could refuse to answer any questions. All of the young people were happy with this and signed a consent form (see Appendix 3.2). Eisner (1991) does raise the issue of whether consent to take part in any qualitative interview is truly informed as the researcher does not know precisely what the research event will look like and what its possible effect might be due to the open-ended nature of the interaction. In this study, the researcher felt that, with the provision, of the structured questionnaire and the neutrality of many of the questions, the risks were less than would have been the case with a less formal approach.

At the end of the interview, the young people were given a gift token for an entertainment shop to thank them for taking part. They all seemed surprised about this and it was hoped therefore that the strategy of not discussing this with them too much had worked and this had not been their motivation for participating.

3.3.3.2 Confidentiality

When discussing informed consent, the interviews were set up so that the young person knew the researcher's role in the authority but that any information collected was separate from the researcher's normal work and that the data would be coded with their social worker's initials and their names changed so that information about them would not be identifiable. It was discussed that the information would all be put together and would only be used for the purposes of the research. However, the caveat was introduced that if at any time they talked about something which suggested that they might be unsafe then this information would need to be discussed with themselves and then passed on to their social worker. The information collected was duly coded and anonymised as discussed. The names reported in this thesis are fabricated.

3.3.3.3 Consequences

A few days after one of the interviews, the researcher contacted one of the residential children's homes and learned that one of young people felt unhappy with having disclosed some personal information and wanted to withdraw her interview. This was done immediately and the researcher checked with her residential link worker and with her social worker that she felt supported and did not require anything further from the researcher personally or from others. After this occasion, the researcher then phoned an appropriate adult, with the young person's permission after an interview to forewarn them to be sensitive to any requests from the young person arising from the interview. There were no other issues identified.

One of the other young people asked how she might go about finding a counsellor after the interview as she had found it helpful talking through her feelings. Another responded in a similar manner that she had found the experience helpful and felt that such opportunities were "good for her". However, as a researcher this raises the issue of separating the research interview from the therapeutic interview. Even where the purposes of the interview were to find out information, and sensitivity and thought were given to how far questioning should go, the quality of listening which was provided, perhaps for young people who often do not feel listened to, resulted in some finding this a beneficial (positive) and therapeutic (difficult on ethical grounds in a short time and with lack of further therapeutic support) experience.

3.4 Results

3.4.1 The sample

The sample consisted of nine young people, four girls and five boys. The girls were Michelle, Penny, Celia and Jill. The boys were Bobby, Robert, Johnny, David and Len. Seven of the young people were from the drama group and two were recruited from study 1 (Celia and David). Four were interviewed in school, one in sheltered accommodation (Michelle), one in a foster care placement (Johnny) and three in a children's home (Bobby, Robert and Jill). Of these young people three were in foster care (Penny, Johnny and David), four in residential children's homes (Len, Bobby, Robert and Jill), one was living at home with her birth father

(Celia) and one was living in independent sheltered housing (Michelle). The age range was between 13 years (year 9) and 17 years (year 12), the mean age was 14 years and 9 months (see Appendix 4.10, Tables O, P and Q for further information).

In terms of their education, seven of the young people were attending mainstream secondary schools (all non-grammar schools in a selective system). One was attending a special school for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Robert) and one was accessing a training facility through her school (Michelle). Of these 9 young people, one withdrew from the study after the interview (Jill) leaving a final sample of three girls and five boys.

3.4.2 Themes arising from the interviews

The results will be discussed in terms of the themes which arose for the researcher. They are presented following the phases used to guide the semi-structured interviews.

3.4.2.1 Phase Two - Background Information

The following themes were identified from analysis of Phase two of the semi-structured interviews. Phase One had included the 'welcome' and introduction to the research rather than the collection of information about the young people. Phase Two included questions about who the young people had lived with, why they had entered care and why they were currently in care, how their birth parents had looked after them and about which schools they had attended. Fourteen themes were identified which will be described below with direct quotes from the young people where appropriate to illuminate the observations made.

3.4.2.1.1 Parental absence

All of the young people, apart from two, Michelle and Johnny, described *parental absence*, by at least one parent. In four of the cases parents had split up. In two of those cases, 'Dad' had left and the children had lived with 'Mum' who then could not cope, in one case because of mental illness and in the other there were

no specific reasons given. In the two cases where the father was the primary carer, it had been the mothers who had initially fulfilled this role, but for different reasons, the mothers had had to leave the families. In one case, the mother had deserted leaving the child with a relative where 'Dad' had then found him and in the other case, 'Mum' had gone into prison for setting fire to the house and 'Dad' had taken on the care of the children. Another young person recounted that 'Mum' had died when he was young and 'Dad' could not cope with caring for three small boys and so they had gone into care. In the sixth case the young person's 'Dad' had been in prison and 'Mum' had been unable to cope and in the seventh case the young person did not know about his early experiences except that 'Mum' and 'Dad' were not now together.

The eighth case was different in that the young person had left home of her own volition having been abused physically and emotionally for a number of years. She had lived temporarily with her older sister and then had lived with a friend where she was raped and abused before being taken into formal care.

3.4.2.1.2 Lack of awareness of their situation – a lack of coherence

Five of the young people interviewed could not remember very much about living with their birth parents due to them being very young when they left that environment. Len, Penny and Celia were cared for at home until they were a little older and therefore could recount aspects of their childhood experiences.

Generally there was a lack of awareness by the young people of why they had been put into care and the reasons for them being placed and moved between various foster placements. David was unclear why his father had put him into care and gave the impression of having a lot of anger and unresolved issues around this. Celia was aware that she had been in care as a baby at least once but did not know why this was or for how long. She talked about not wanting to ask her dad and about waiting to receive her file from social services when she was eighteen in the hope that this would answer some of her questions. Johnny did not know why he had been taken into care and could not remember living with his birth family although he did still have contact with all of them.

3.4.2.1.3 Substance abuse within the birth family

Both Celia and Len talked about their parents' use of drugs and alcohol and about how these contributed to their being taken into care. Celia described her parents' activities in the following way, as

“general stuff parents don't do – they do you know, when they are younger...they don't do when they have children...my Mum did more, when we were around, which she shouldn't have” (lines 103-108).

3.4.2.1.4 Care, Love and Provision of a Safe Environment within the Birth Family

Michelle had lived at home until she was 15 years of age and her interview was filled with references to the lack of care and love provided by her mother in particular. She talked of being cared for by an older sister and childminders and of the lack of parental love and encouragement for which she was desperate.

Michelle talked about the differential level of love and care provided to her sisters as there were five girls within the family, two older sisters by Michelle's 'Dad' and then two younger sisters by her step 'Dad'. Michelle saw herself as being treated like a kid and being treated like one of the younger ones even though her older sister was only eighteen months older than her. Michelle was far more positive about her stepfather saying that he was the only person who made her feel worth something at home, even though he called her “thick” and wished that she was more like her sister. Celia described her parents as looking after her and her brother very well, providing them with food, clothing and love. This separation of parental care into provision for the meeting of primary needs (and Love) and then parental responsibility for providing a safe and secure environment could also be seen in the case of Penny who talked of her parents looking after her “normally” – and then later talked about the time when her father had left, her mother's mental illness had progressed and she had basically been cared for at her grandparents house. Whether this separation is to defend the parents that they love or is a way of coping with what had happened is unclear.

Len on the other hand was very realistic about the care or lack of care, which he had received although without laying blame at the door of his parents. He described his parents as being “unsuitable” to care for him as his mother was always drunk and his father was in prison. He talked of getting himself up and off

to school then returning to get money so that he could go to Tesco's, buy food to cook dinner for himself and his mother and then put himself to bed. He was five years of age. He also talked about finding his mother in the garden in labour with his baby sister and then heating the milk for the baby. He described his feelings about this time as

“funny really. I just can't believe how a young person can look after a fully grown adult” [lines135-136].

3.4.2.1.5 Needs of the parents superseding those of the young people

Len's account in 3.4.2.1.4 tells of how his needs were second to those of his mother where he was caring for her as well as for his baby sister. Michelle talked a great deal about her mother's needs, like those of Celia's mothers' too, superseding the needs of the children. She talked of the family having to move from one place to another because of mother's activities and of having to leave toys behind.

3.4.2.1.6 Experience of abuse

Michelle talked about incidents of physical abuse, for example being thrown down the stairs at the age of three, being strangled and of being hit with a belt buckle as well as trying to protect her older sister from the same punishment. She talked about emotional abuse, about being locked in her room with no food for a day when she had been naughty, of being called “fat”, “thick” and of her Mother not accepting when school said she was dyslexic, rather, blaming Michelle for not trying at school. Michelle's interview responses were full of contradictions which made her account come across as that of someone struggling to come to terms with what had happened to her, both at home and then later and in terms of her view of herself as dictated by her home. She talked of being “terrified at home!” and “terrified of her mother” yet also talked of being homesick, of her one wish one Christmas was to be at home, and of being kept in cotton wool for her whole life. Michelle's description of her family as the

“people you knew actually loved you, even though they didn't always show it” (124)

seemed particularly haunting given her childhood experiences and for the researcher echoed the importance of the birth family to all young people.

3.4.2.1.7 Contact with siblings

None of the young people interviewed were living with a sibling at the time of interview although six of them had siblings. Two of the young people had siblings who had been adopted, others had siblings who were in foster care or in one case a sibling still living at home. Contact with siblings seemed to be positive and regular. Several of the young people talked about going out with their siblings in town, going to the cinema and Bobby talked about coaching his younger brother not to 'skive' as he knew the effects it could have on school performance having seen some of his friends failing in school. Michelle had little contact with her four sisters due to her mother forbidding contact.

3.4.2.1.8 Contact with birth parents

This seemed more problematic and was a major theme in the interviews for some of the young people, either positively or negatively. In terms of coping, two of the young women described their father being the thing which had helped them cope due to their always 'being there and supporting them' even though reflecting that part of the problem that led to them being in care was due to their parents. Alternatively, lack of contact with birth parents was mentioned by three of the young men as being something which had hindered them in coping. David talked of the lack of contact he had with his father in terms of his father not being bothered anymore and it being his ('Dad's') choice – reflecting a lack of power or control over this on his own part. Social workers were mentioned as helping the young people with this, trying to find a birth mother who had not been in contact for eight years and also trying to help one young man find his real father's gravestone so that he could see where his father was buried. There was a varied amount of contact with the wider birth family and interestingly often relatives of stepparents seemed to be more involved for example with Penny, David and Michelle, than birth relatives.

3.4.2.1.9 Contact with others from the birth family

Seven of the young people talked about someone from their birth family asking about how they were getting on in school although often this was only when they had contact and so was very irregular. Only three talked about contact with

grandparents who were interested in their education and in none of the cases were these birth grandparents. Two were grandparents by stepparents and one set by adoptive parents.

3.4.2.1.10 Continuity in care placements

The young people had had a range of experiences, including between two and nine foster care placements, stays in residential homes (in all cases, current placements), adoptive placements and in 50% of the cases (four young people), attempts to rehabilitate the children with members of their birth families. In only one case had this been successful. The longest foster placements recalled by the young people were four years and the shortest was three months.

Where movement was known about, it tended to occur through “not getting on” (David), “hassle” (Robert), the behaviour of the young person towards the foster carers (Penny), rehabilitation to birth family (Robert, Celia), or issues with the foster care provided by the family.

3.4.2.1.11 Continuity of school placements

The young people interviewed had attended between three to six schools each, up to three primary schools and up to three secondary schools. Most of the young people did not raise concerns about changes of school apart from Penny who had been to three secondary schools in three years since she had been in care (and nine foster placements) and Michelle. Michelle’s changes of schools had been whilst she was living with her birth family and she reflected on the difficulties that this had caused her with gaining literacy skills (and the help she needed) and in making friends. Movements between schools were because of changes of placement, particularly placements outcounty. Penny was commuting for an hour by taxi across the county to maintain her school placement in July 2003. She had only been attending the school since November 2002.

3.4.2.1.12 Quality of foster care support

There were both positive and negative accounts of the quality of care provided by foster carers. Michelle talked about being afraid of one of her previous foster

carers who restricted the amount of food she was given (because she had an eating disorder and would throw it up anyway), Celia talked about complaining to social services and being kicked out of a foster care placement because the foster mother had made her brother feel stupid because he was dyslexic. Len talked about being removed from a placement when his Nan had found bruises the shape of belt buckles under his clothes and Johnny talked about “bad things” occurring in a placement although he would not talk anymore about it. That four of the young people (50%) had experienced abuse within foster families is of concern although all of the experiences were in the past. More current research may be needed to check that this is not occurring now.

On the other hand, young people talked about the positive support they received from good carers, of the interest shown in their schoolwork (see later) and of enjoying time with foster siblings.

3.4.2.1.13 Quality of residential care

Residential care received some mixed reviews. Len talked about being upset at first and then getting used to it. He referred to a pecking order and the gaining of respect in the home. Michelle also talked about hating it at first but getting to know and trust the members of staff. She reflected on the culture of the oldest being the most respected and therefore followed. Bobby and Robert however, described it as a quiet and supportive place to be, where people showed interest in them and they could concentrate on doing well in schoolwork. Bobby discussed how he had been living with his brother in foster care but one of them had had to leave because the foster parents could not cope with the constant arguments. Bobby had left and although he described being upset at first he then reflected that it would be best for him as he had GCSE’s coming up and he would need somewhere quiet to do coursework. He would not have been able to concentrate sharing a room with his brother.

3.4.2.1.14 Contentment with current care situation

Generally, the young people appeared relatively settled and happy in their current placements. However, Johnny did reflect that he liked going to school to “get out of the house” [line 30]. Michelle talked of the worries and struggles of juggling her income with her expenditure and of the loneliness living independently. Celia,

living at home with her Dad talked about her social life being her way of getting away from home. Finally, Penny was in the middle of an argument with her foster carer about her school attendance when I was involved in interviewing her, having come into school when her foster carer had agreed with school that she should stay at home.

3.4.2.2 Phase Three - school and education

The following themes were identified from Phase Three of the semi-structured interview. The phase included questions about when the young person learned to read, how the young person felt about school, what they were good at at school, what support they received at school, about communication between school, their care placement and their social worker, how they felt about other pupils knowing that they were in care and about their friendships. Ten themes were identified within this phase.

3.4.2.2.1 Communication between care placements and school

One of the residential homes appeared to be particularly strong at liaising with the schools, attending parent's evenings, school plays and sports days as well as phoning the school to see how the young people were getting on. The young person in the other home talked more about contact being around checking up on him about school trips to see if he was telling the truth. Foster carers were also felt to have lots of contact with school, especially through parent's evenings. There was less time for attending school plays or sports days. Generally contact appeared to be around negative issues such as detentions, suspensions, truancy and involved school phoning the foster carers. Penny did say that school also phoned the carers when she was doing particularly well. All of the young people said that there was someone in their care placement who asked about school – either a foster carer or their key worker in their home. Questions were around homework, grades and more generally whether they had had a good day.

3.4.2.2.2 Communication between social workers and school

This was less positive with only two of the young people knowing that their social workers had contact with school. One young person said that there was not

contact and the others did not know. Celia talked about her Head of Year attending her Looked After Children reviews in school. Seven of the young people felt that their social worker would say that they were getting on OK in school apart from Celia who talked about social services always having felt that she had done particularly well in school compared to other young people in care.

“I..always kept school as a priority” [line 302].

Other responses included from Penny,

“I don’t know, I never really talk to her, I don’t like her” [line 166]

and from Bobby

“Who? Oh, she thinks I’m getting on fine” [lines 242-244].

This may have been him mishearing the question but could also have been a reflection of the amount he sees his particular social worker or his feelings about the importance of her opinion.

3.4.2.2.3 Views of school

The young people’s views and experiences of school were very mixed. Some specific examples will be discussed. Generally, the young people’s enjoyment of school was linked to their behaviour in school, the amount of support they received and their participation in the life of the school. Even the young people who were most negative could highlight positive points about school. For example, Penny said that she hated school and the teachers. She did want to be in school though to see her friends and even went into school on the day that the researcher met with her despite her foster carer having agreed with her school that she should stay at home. She took a taxi every day for over an hour across the county. It therefore appeared that despite disliking school she was motivated to be part of it.

Michelle appeared very bitter about her secondary school experience. She was angry that schools had not listened to her complaining about her care at home, despite, in the case of her secondary school, the fact that her older sisters had complained and one was in care. This is not reflected in the earlier section 3.4.2.2.2 or 3.4.2.2.3. (communication between school and carers or social

workers respectively) as she was, at this time, not in care, but was living at home. This is therefore an issue about child protection and how young people are identified who may be in need of care. Michelle felt that the school had been more concerned with its own reputation than with supporting her and this was why they had encouraged her to have an abortion when at the age of 15 years she had become pregnant.

Len liked school but talked a lot about being bullied – this will be discussed under peer attitudes towards care. Robert also expressed some liking for school, but really only talked in a very limited way about the reasons for this. He talked about being allowed to play pool at breaktimes and about being allowed to use the ICT room if he had received the correct coloured sheet (the school's system for rewards and removal of privileges). He talked of lots of pupils being excluded and the very small groups that he was often in and that sometimes he therefore found it boring because the activities which they could take part in were subsequently reduced.

Celia expressed her love of school and that she had always seen school as a priority and that this was recognised by others. She loved everything about school apart from homework and some teachers.

3.4.2.2.4 Behaviour of the young people in school

Several of the young people reflected on their behaviour in school. Two of the young people were able to link this with their home experiences. David talked of other pupils starting fights with him at primary school and him running away and that when he went into care, of him changing and him starting the fights. He said that he had been suspended seven times for fighting, despite having support for anger management and counselling through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). He talked about being angry and confused when he was rejected by his father and was placed in care. Michelle talked about her behaviour being a reaction to what was happening at home.

Both Michelle and Penny described their behaviour in school as poor, and both talked about being in trouble for 'bunking off' school and being rude to teachers. Michelle described going into town, hiding in the school toilets with a friend and

only really attending her favourite lesson, English. When asked what she was good at in school, she said:

“being rude to my teachers...getting thrown out of lessons” [lines 625-626].

Michelle was suspended twice, once for fighting in a provoked situation and once for taking washing powder into school, pretending it was drugs.

3.4.2.2.5 Views of themselves as learners

Michelle presented as a young woman who was spending a lot of time coming to terms with her view of herself and what had happened to her. This was true of her view of herself as a learner. She talked about her lack of attendance at school and about what was going on at home (her interpretation), resulting in her not achieving good grades in her GCSE's. She had felt this very keenly, taking it as a sign that her mother had been right about her being 'thick' and she went on to retake some subjects. Michelle said that she had been labelled dyslexic by her SENCO and she appeared to have found this helpful in coming to terms with her difficulties and how her mother and stepfather had put her down.

David talked about enjoying some lessons and hating others and about this depending on whether he knew what to do and could do the work, He appeared to have little self-confidence and needed to have this re-affirmed, particularly in front of others. His lack of power and his lack of control of his situation may have been being expressed here through his needing to succeed in lessons.

The question about learning to read is included within this theme as the young people were asked to rate their reading on a scale of one to ten. Again the young people rated themselves as scattered across the skill range from Len reportedly learning to read at 4 years of age through several young people learning at First School, Penny needing a little extra help to Robert learning in Year 6 and Michelle learning at secondary school. Len was most critical of his reading saying that he read very slowly word by word, whereas Robert who had many more difficulties learning to read and was temporarily placed in a school for children with learning difficulties placed himself well up the scale as he said that he read the harder books from a scheme of books which were intended for primary school children and he enjoyed reading. Michelle too placed herself very highly as she read a lot and enjoyed reading. This would suggest that some of the young people had a

highly critical view of themselves as learners, whereas others were over-positive in their view (or perhaps had misunderstood the question).

3.4.2.2.6 Support in school

Positively, all of the young people felt that they had someone to talk to in school, even Michelle who complained of not being listened to. She expressed her respect for her new Head of Year who she felt would change the school. Others felt able to talk to their form tutors, heads of year, teachers generally and even, in the case of Penny, the headteacher. Seven out of eight of the young people had received help with their work over their school careers – from extra help with reading and spelling, with understanding words, with confidence boosting and with the loan of equipment. Michelle talked about the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in her school reading with her every day and introducing a reward system to help motivate her. In the area of behaviour, help was less obvious although Len talked about his identified teacher helping him with bullying issues and helping him in getting along with other pupils and David talked about receiving anger management sessions in school, again from the SENCO.

3.4.2.2.7 Support from external support services

None of the young people talked about having received support from outside professionals and none were known to the Educational Psychology Service apart from Robert and Bobby who were the subject of Statements of Special Educational Needs. There therefore appears to be a barrier whereby the young people could access support in school, but not necessarily support from external services linked to schools. Whether schools felt that they were already involved with too many professionals or felt that social services would be taking care of links with other professionals is unclear. Another reason could be that the difficulties presented by the young people were 'hidden' and hence they never reached the top of a priority list to receive support from external services within school.

3.4.2.2.8 Involvement in the life of the school

The pupils who were involved in other activities expressed a liking of school. They presumably felt more a part of the school and their greater participation had resulted in greater enjoyment for them. Bobby was very involved in school being a peer supporter in the playground for other pupils and also being in the school play. Johnny too talked of being involved in lots of other activities in school, for him these were around the sporting activities, all of which he represented the school in.

3.4.2.2.9 Friendships

Five of the young people (60%) talked about having lots of friends. The activities they enjoyed with their friends were very typical for young people of their age – playing football, going to the cinema, hanging about town, listening to music and shopping. Many of these friends were from school but some were from outside. David and Len talked about having a few friends and in the case of Len, he appeared to have two sets of friends. Friends who he had known for a long time, were in care and saw out of school and then peers in school who he talked about organising trips for him to go on to Alton Towers and to Disneyland. None of these trips had yet happened although Len saw the fact that they were being discussed as very “positive”.

Michelle talked a lot about friendships and the impression gained was that she had had a lot of difficulties in this area and had a rather distorted view of friendship. Michelle talked of having difficulty making friends when the family were moving around a lot and then finally having friends once they settled in one primary school. She then went to a different secondary school to everyone else when the family once again moved and she talked about being very unhappy when other pupils only liked her because her sister, who was much more popular than her, told them to. She described one friend, Tina and how they truanted from school together and hid in the toilets. On one occasion she said that they

“tried to make friends in the wrong way” [lines 543-544]

by taking crushed washing powder into school in silver foil and giving it to a girl who said that she was a drug addict. They were suspended from school. Her one friend Tina, who she felt was the

“only person I trusted, who took me for who I was” [lines 562-563], then let her down completely after Michelle had gone to live with Tina and had been raped by Tina’s much respected older brother. Michelle had gone to tell Tina about the rape and seek support but Tina had sided with her brother and had warned Michelle not to hurt her brother. Michelle described her feelings,
“it was like, this was my friend, what’s going on here...I didn’t understand what had happened and I was asking her to kind of be there and explain” [93-96].

This experience appeared to have really affected Michelle as illustrated by her view of friendships as nothing more than acquaintanceships. She said that she only had a few friends, all older than herself as

“everyone’s looking out for themselves...to see what they can get out of other people.. that’s what life is about” [730-734].

Michelle had become very defensive in her view of relationships. The friendships which she described were unusual in that she described one friend as a sister and another as ‘stunning’ and ‘living in an immaculate house’. The latter Michelle talks about as being important and of value to her as the way the house was kept reflected how others saw you

“I make sure I don’t disappoint that..I’d be scared to disappoint her” [766-768].

For the interviewer this seemed to reflect aspects of her relationship with her mother.

In considering the spread of friends who were in care, only Len described his best friends as being in care. The other young people either had a mixture of friends or their friends were mostly outside of care.

3.4.2.2.10 The attitudes of other pupils to care

The young people talked about mixed views and experiences. David, Robert, Celia and Penny said they did not mind other pupils knowing they were in care. Michelle said she had not liked it although the time for her was tied up with her pregnancy and termination.

Celia talked about telling her close friends who could then offer her positive support, but that she would not want the whole school to know that she had been

in care. David, Bobby and Johnny felt that they had not been treated differently because they had been in care, although the other young people felt that they had. This different treatment appeared to fall into two main areas.

Robert, Len and Michelle talked about name-calling and bullying. Len said that this sometimes included violence. The name calling seemed to fall around not living with their parents, not having parents and living in a children's home. Both Len and Robert felt that other people were bullied for other reasons and it was not just them or was not specifically because they were in care. Michelle, Len and Penny also talked about people asking lots of questions and them being over-friendly, trying to comfort them or suddenly being their best friends when they would not have been otherwise. This was not felt to be very positive. Penny said that she answered their questions honestly and then often the other pupils would become friends. Lastly, Penny and Michelle talked about other pupils being wary of them, tip-toeing around them. Several of the young people talked about their having grown up and that this had helped them come to terms with it so that if others said things they saw it as a problem for those other young people and not a problem for them.

Lastly, the issues of telling one person and the whole school knowing was raised by two of the other young people and Len felt that this had resulted in him being treated differently.

3.4.2.3 Phase Four - support for education in care placements

This overall theme was identified from Phase Four of the semi-structured interview. The phase included questions about where young people did their homework and what facilities there were to help them with it.

Support for education within care placements was a real strength for these young people. All of the young people had somewhere quiet that they could do their homework and all but one had a desk in their room or a table available. Six of the young people had access to a computer in their care setting, including one who had a laptop provided by social services. One young person said that there was a computer in the office of the children's home, but he was not allowed to use it and had to go to the library. The last young person said that she refused to use

computers. All of the young people had access to books in their care setting and five had library tickets which they used.

Again, all of the young people felt that there was someone in their care placement who could help them with homework if they asked for help and a wide range of people were identified. This included their foster carers, staff in their residential home, if they had time, birth parents or other adults, for example a Connexions Personal Adviser. Help included showing the young people better ways of doing things, helping them to use the internet, helping them revise, talking through questions and discussing with them what they knew about a topic before the young person had a go at writing about it.

3.4.2.4 Phase Five - plans and dreams for the future

The following themes were identified from Phase Five of the semi-structured interview. The phase included questions about what the young person thought might happen to them in the next year, what they wanted to do when they left school, where they saw themselves when they were twenty-five and where others who might be important would see them when they were twenty years older. Three themes were identified within this phase.

3.4.2.4.1 Separation of care and school for planning

Five out of the eight (60%) of the young people answered the question about where they saw themselves in the next year only in regard to their school status. Three thought that they would be awaiting GCSE results the same time next year, one either staying on at school or getting a job, another having left school and waiting to start college. Celia would be awaiting her A level results and then wanted to take a year out. Two of the young people took the question to mean only their care placement and talked about being in the same place and Johnny talked about taking each day as it comes.

“I’ll probably be here in the same place next year” [83].

3.4.2.4.2 Planning for their emotional development

Only Michelle, perhaps because of her being the eldest, expressed any thoughts, dreams and plans relating to her mental health and her situation. She reflected that she wanted to have a

“complete makeover on myself. Not my outside, but my inside... I wanna, like, learn to ...stay more focused on what’s going on and just stop looking in the past” [768-789].

She also talked about wanting to get new things to make her place nice and wanting to start a part-time job and make a couple of friends of her own age. She was far more rounded in her answers and seemed to have thought more about what she wanted.

Bobby was the only young person who mentioned a personal relationship saying that he hoped twenty years later that he might have a girlfriend. The other young people failed to mention any relationships within their hope for the future.

3.4.2.4.3 Planning for a career

Thinking about leaving school, four of the young people (50%) had clear ideas about what they wanted to do as a career and what qualifications they needed to get there, having used Kudos, consulted with Connexions and having worked or completed work experience in their chosen fields. Bobby wanted to be a chef, as did Len, if he did not make it as a hotel manager or barber. Celia was planning a year out followed by university to gain a performing arts diploma and then to join the police force – her reasons being that she was always curious about where police cars were going and the amount of contact she had had with the police in her life so far. Johnny was set on becoming a General Practitioner (GP) having helped his Nan when she was ill. Penny however had no clear ideas, nor did Robert or David. They also expressed thoughts about further education, but were unclear. David had missed his careers interview as he had been suspended from school. Michelle, having already left school, was engaged with a training institution through school and was retaking GCSE exams before hoping to enrol at college.

Thoughts about where they would be as adults at 25 years of age, reflected their level of certainty about the preceding question. Len was sure that he would be

working in a top London hotel earning and spending lots of money. Johnny saw himself on track to being a Doctor studying at University and living with his friends. Michelle was very clear that she would be living with her sister and would own her own hairdressing salon, having worked as a stylist, having proved herself to her grandparents and received some financial support from them. Her main motivation for this appeared to be proving her mother wrong and having her name known. She talked about wanting to continue with her English and write a book about her life for other young people.

The other young people, although unclear about work, talked about having their own flats, living alone, living independently and being able to do whatever they wanted when they wanted. This may reflect a desire for having control over their lives having been in the care system for a number of years in most cases.

3.4.2.5 Phase Six - coping with being in care

The following themes were identified from Phase Six of the semi-structured interview. The phase included questions about how the young person felt that they had coped with being in care, what had helped them and anything which had hindered them. Four themes were identified within this phase.

3.4.2.5.1 Reflections on Coping

Five of the young people answered that they felt they had coped at least quite well with being in care. Comments included that they had just got on with it, from Len that he thought that if other people had had as many moves as him that they would be very aggressive but he did not feel any aggression at all. Robert said that he was used to it and felt that he would always know what would come up and what the circumstances would be of going into care again. Johnny was more circumspect in responding that he just took a day at a time and did not quantify how well he had coped.

David commented that he did not cope at all well at first, that he had been abusive to foster carers, had told them to go away for no reason and had got into lots of fights. He had then calmed down and pulled himself together so that although he was still abusive, he did not fight – around the house anyway. Celia too did not

quantify how well she had coped but talked about being affected by things in “other ways” which she then did not describe. She said that she had just dealt with it.

3.4.2.5.2 Coping Strategies – Support from Others

The young people identified resources and people who had helped them to cope with being in care. David talked about anger management support and CAMHS support. Bobby talked about the social workers support and the people who had helped him to find his ‘Dad’s’ grave. Johnny talked about the people he lived with in terms of the foster carers and the support they gave him. Penny and Celia both talked about their parents – Penny her ‘Dad’ and Celia both of her parents.

3.4.2.5.3 Coping strategies – within-child

Celia reflected that although it was her parents who had caused the problems which had resulted in her and her brother being taken into care, they had made her who she was (i.e. a young person who was able to cope). She could not specify what strengths she had or personality traits which made her able to cope apart from saying that she just ‘dealt with it.’ She talked about the love which she had always had from her family and the fact that she tended to lose herself in her friendships and social life so that she did not go home and did not think about home. The importance of friendships could be considered ‘support from others’ although it is how Celia talked about the use she made of her friendships which struck the researcher rather than the actual support which was offered.

Michelle and Len both talked about things which had been said to them and the researcher considers that it was how they perceived these statements and went on to use them that was important. Len said that his social worker had told him that it was not his fault that he was in care and that this had always helped him. Michelle said that her Nan had talked about God not throwing people things which they could not handle and that she now reflected on this and on the things which she had already coped with so that she knew she could deal with anything new which came up. She talked about asking for help, sleeping on problems and going for a walk to take her mind off things. She talked about people who committed suicide not being able to handle things, when of course they could – she did not

relate this to her own attempted suicide in any way and showed no awareness that she might have been expected to do so.

3.4.2.5.4 Hindering factors

Considering what had not helped them cope with being in care, two young people talked about lack of contact with their birth family being very difficult for them. One of these was Len who only had letterbox contact with his parents and the other was David whose mother had deserted him and whose father had put him into care having been unable to cope with him. The other young people talked about social workers who were too busy to see them, Celia talked about her mothers' boyfriends and then appeared to become overwhelmed by the question and said she could not answer it. Michelle talked about a specific outwards bounds course which she had attended on which the other girls had excluded her, talked about her behind her back and the teachers had thought that it was her own fault. She was obviously upset by this experience and could only conclude that it had helped her to learn that she had to move on.

3.5 Discussion

The transcripts were analysed using a template-type approach (Robson, 2003) whereby key codes set (in this case, answers to specific questions determined by the literature review), served as a template for analysis. Themes were identified and were discussed. Drawing any conclusions about the wider population of children in care would obviously be problematic with such a small sample and with the representativeness of the sample, even of young people in care. Six of the young people interviewed were from a drama group and hence might be expected to be more confident in making their views known.

None-the-less, for the eight young people interviewed the following over-arching themes emerged.

3.5.1 Themes arising

Thirty-three themes were identified and are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Themes identified within Study 2

| Themes arising | |
|--|---|
| Parental Absence – loss and bereavement Lack of awareness of situation – lacking a sense of coherence Substance Abuse within the birth family Care, love and the provision of a safe environment within the birth family Needs of parents superseding those of the children or young people Experiences of abuse Contact with siblings Contact with birth parents Contact with other members of the birth family Continuity in care Continuity in schooling Quality of foster care support Quality of residential care Contentment with current situation Communication between care placements and school | Communication between social worker and school Feelings about school Behaviour in school Views of selves as learners (academic self-concept) Support within school Lack of involvement of external support services Involvement in life of the school Friendships Bullying and the attitudes of other pupils to care Support for education in care placements Plans and dreams for the future Separation of home and school in planning Planning for 'mental health' Planning for a career Coping Coping Strategies – support from others Coping strategies – within-child Hindering factors |

Within the pre-care environment and the young people's birth families, *parental absence* was a key theme although there was a range of reasons for the absence including divorce, being in prison, desertion and bereavement. Issues of loss and bereavement were therefore present for many of the young people even before they entered care. In this sample of young people, none of them entered care through their own 'fault', none were accommodated at the request of parents because of their being beyond parents' control as was seen in Study 1. *Parental absence* could therefore have been seen to be playing a role in these young people being taken into care with several of the remaining parents being unable to cope with their children.

Another issue arising for the researcher was the reasoning which the young people gave for their parents' behaviour. This was highlighted for two of the young people where they separated the love and the meeting of their primary needs from any issues of parental responsibility and appropriate parental behaviour. They therefore responded that their parents cared for them very well although from their responses it was suggested that their parents were not being available or responsible in providing a secure environment for their children. Whether this was

a protective or defensive mechanism on these young people's part whereby they could retain the emotions and love for their parents without having to assign blame or see them in as negative a light as an outsider might. Another young person appeared to deal with this through detaching his emotions from the facts of the situation.

The tension for these young people in terms of wanting to be at home and keeping the love and respect for their parents intact whilst facing the way that they were treated and the lack of care which they received, appears to be present and tangible. *Contact with their birth family* and issues of identity came through for several of the young people with contact being identified as a factor which helped them cope where it was present and in contrast a factor which hindered coping where it was absent. For one young person where his Mother had deserted him and his father had later put him into care this appeared to be particularly difficult. He had found entering care very difficult and described his behaviour and episodes of extreme anger, even now, several years later. For one young person who had been adopted, this lack of face to face contact felt as if it may have been a precipitating factor for his adoption breakdown although this was not addressed directly.

In terms of the young people's care placements, generally there appeared to be a lot of uncertainty and lack of awareness around why they were in care and what their legal status was. For one young person in particular issues of power and control were arising and for others, this was expressed in terms of what they saw themselves doing when they were older. All talked about independence, living alone and being able to do whatever they wanted to do whenever they wanted. Experience of foster care was mixed with the most recent placements appearing more positive and supportive for the young people. However, there were descriptions of abuse within foster care.

The residential care provided for the young people was felt to be very positive although there were reflections about the culture of the homes including peer relationships and how these might effect a very vulnerable young person's self esteem. Other young people saw the homes as offering them somewhere quiet and supportive where they could achieve schoolwork. This felt as if being within a foster family might be too confrontational and 'full-on' for some young people who

might benefit, for a time, from a place where they were given a less personal approach and could have more space.

In reflecting on the contact between their care placements and schools, most of the young people felt that contact was only really taking place when negative events had occurred or at formal events. However, this may reflect the nature of home-school contact for any young person, particularly in secondary education, as all of the interview sample were of that age. There were also examples of good practice where home and school phoned to share good behaviour and grades. This raises the question about how much a young person in care wants or needs attention above that which might be the case for any other young person and how much, when things are going well, they want to be treated in the same way as all other young people in school. The contact between social workers and schools is less clear. Only one young person mentioned her Personal Education Plan (PEP) and her Head of year attending her Looked After Children (LAC) Reviews. Whether young people are not being invited to attend their PEP reviews, whether schools are not participating in LAC reviews or a combination of the above would need to be researched.

In terms of the young people's feelings about school, most felt that their schools were supporting them well. They all felt that there was someone they could talk to in school and that they received support for learning where they needed it. There was discussion about bullying although again, this appeared to be addressed with and on behalf of the young people. Peer group issues were present for some young people who had difficulties maintaining appropriate friendships. Others talked of normal peer group activities and support and understanding from their friends.

3.5.2 Limitations of Study 2

As discussed in Study 1, obtaining an adequate sample was the most obvious constraint. The researcher's good working relationship with the Children's Rights Officer and trust established there from previous work allowed access to a sample of young people with the confidence to meet and talk about their experiences, apart from the one young woman who withdrew.

The ability of the young people to reflect on their experiences and to talk through issues was in some cases a constraint. In general the girls were more reflective in their responses and gave fuller, more articulate answers to questions which then provided a richer source for analysis. Michelle in particular spent around 5-6 times as long as the other young people exploring her experiences with the researcher. She had recently moved into independent living and talked of her loneliness at times and so it was felt that she valued the opportunity to spend some time with an adult who was interested in her and her experiences.

Whether the gender of the researcher had an impact on the articulateness of the sample is difficult to evaluate, the researcher being female. Whether adolescent boys would have felt more comfortable expressing their views to a male interviewer is a possibility which should be considered. However, with a mixed gender sample, the only other approach would be to have two interviewers with the inherent complexities of different questioning styles and approaches to be taken into account.

An older sample may have proved more articulate and able to express their views. The fact that the young people had little understanding of the research apart from that gained from the brief leaflet (see Appendix 3.1) and from the introduction to the interview may also have lead to them having less to say. Allowing them an earlier introduction may have given them time to think outside the interview and so may have resulted in a richer picture being gained.

Finally, the use of the semi-structured interview proforma may have lead to less fluency and freedom of expression on the part of the young people. The interviews were too structured to really look at the interactions of factors. A more open-ended interview approach may have resulted in more detail in the young people's accounts. However, within Study 2 the risks which could arise in this approach, whereby a more therapeutic type of interview could be entered and the young people would require more ongoing support after the event, were not able to be covered by one researcher.

3.5.3 Implications for future work

This was a very small sample of young people, and as discussed, was not representative of young people in care more generally. Whether it would be possible to follow-up the study with a larger sample would be interesting and valuable. This would allow either identification of more themes across a more diverse sample of young people in care, perhaps involving some care leavers (see below) or would allow for research into whether similar themes arose with a different sample of young people which would give information about the robustness of the research findings.

In terms of the interaction of factors, a different, more open-ended questionnaire design would have been more useful as the structured interviews did not necessarily give the detail which was needed for this type of approach. It was not really possible to look at how different factors interacted, the turning points in young people's lives or their thoughts and feelings about what had happened to them. The interview with Michelle was more open-ended naturally as she tended to lead the conversation. This did allow for a far more in-depth exploration of her perceptions of what had happened to her and therefore a far richer picture about possible factors interacting in her life was gained for analysis. This was then written up as a case study alongside the case of Len. Although there was not scope to include these case studies within the main body of this thesis, they can be found in the Appendix (Appendix 3.5). The researcher feels that this approach, with hindsight, offers a greater level of detail and a clearer opportunity to look at the interaction of factors and at turning points within the young people's lives.

Seeing the young person in different environments and talking with different adults who know them, including foster carers or residential workers would improve the richness of the material available for case study analysis. This could then contribute to a more detailed analysis of the factors interacting in their lives and about how they coped and adapted to the stresses encountered. It would then be valuable, if judged to be appropriate, to take the initial thoughts back to the young person, especially in terms of identifying turning points in their lives, to look at specific points further and to validate or authenticate the researcher's feelings and thoughts which arose from the interviews.

A sample of older young people, such as young people who had recently left care (18-21 years) might form a more articulate and thoughtful sample. As highlighted in section 3.5.2, introducing the research to the young people prior to the interviews could aid reflection and discussion within the interviews, perhaps by running a focus group before the interviews for interested young people. This could have the added benefit of the young people having met the researcher prior to the interviews and hence those who then came forward for the individual interviews would feel more comfortable with the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY THREE – ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.1 Introduction

Study 3 had been intended to replicate Study 1, but with a larger sample of young people (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.1, 'Research Design'). After Study 1 had been completed, the difficulties encountered in obtaining a sample and in gathering information about young people in care were reflected upon and the procedures for obtaining a sample were adjusted. The conclusions of Study 1 had lead to changes being made to the research questions and the resilience framework used (see Study 1, for a discussion of how this occurred). The new research questions and specific hypotheses are outlined in section 4.2 'Rationale and Aims of Study 3' below. See Figure 3 (Section 2.5), for the Final Framework of Risk and Protective Factors.

4.2 Rationale and Aims of Study 3

The aim of Study 3 was to collect quantitative data about a sample of young people in care. Information was to be collected about the risk and protective factors in their lives and about their educational success so that the research questions could be addressed. The framework of factors used was further developed through Study 1 (the pilot questionnaire study) from that put forward following the literature review. This new framework was used to develop the specific hypotheses underlying the research questions.

4.2.1 The Research Questions

4.2.1.1 "How do young people in care who are educationally successful in school compare to those who are not on a range of 10 **protective** (3 within-child, 2 within their pre-care environment, 3 within their care environment and 2 within their school environment) and 10 **risk** factors (3 within-child, 3 within their pre-care environment, 2 within their care environment and 2 within their school environment)?"

Please see 2.2.1.1 – 2.2.1.3 for the specific hypotheses (unchanged from Study 1).

4.2.1.2 Is it possible to identify how some individual young people develop resilience (i.e. educational success) and how the factors in their lives interact with each other in the development of resilience?"

Specific Hypotheses

In each pairing, the first hypothesis covers the protective factors in the framework and the second hypothesis covers the risk factors. Educationally successful is defined in the same way as in research question 4.2.1.1.

Within-child factors

4.2.1.2.1 Young people in care educationally successful show a) internal loci of control, b) have plans and aspirations for the future and c) learned to read early.

4.2.1.2.2 Young people in care educationally successful do not have a) poor social skills, b) behaviour difficulties or c) low self-esteem.

Environmental factors experienced before the young person enters care

4.2.1.2.3 Young people in care who are educationally successful a) received adequate parental care within their birth families and b) had a birth parent interested in their education.

4.2.1.2.4 Young people in care who are educationally successful did not have a) parents with mental health problems, b) drug or alcohol abuse and c) were not abused or maltreated within their birth families.

Environmental factors present for the young person in their care placement

4.2.1.2.5 Young people in care who are educationally successful have a) an adult interested in their education, b) successful friends who are not in care and c) Resources and a place to do their homework.

4.2.1.2.6 Young people in care who are educationally successful did not have a) a high number of care placements or b) were not in residential care.

Environmental factors present for the young person in care in their school placement.

4.2.1.2.7 Young people in care who are educationally successful have a) an adult they feel they can talk to in school and b) other achievements and involvements in school life.

4.2.1.2.8 Young people in care who are educationally successful a) have not been excluded from school and b) have not tranted or shown significant periods of non-attendance.

4.2.1.3 “If specific factors or causal mechanisms are identified, do these fall within a specific microsystem for the child, (e.g., home, birth family, school, peers, within-child)?”

Please see 2.2.3.1 – 2.2.3.4 for the specific hypotheses (unchanged from Study 1).

Information was collected about the young people using questionnaires designed for the study (C and D) and the Revised Rutter Scales (E and F), sent to both social workers and teachers in schools (see 4.3.4 *Measures* and 4.3.5 *Procedures*). Additional data was obtained by including information from Study 2 (the interview study). Some of the young people interviewed agreed to have questionnaires completed and so a full set of data was held about those pupils. For others, data from the interview alone was included (see below). Data was then analysed against the research questions and the Final Framework of Risk and Protective Factors (Figure 3). Difficulties encountered and constraints of analysis are discussed.

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1. Research Design

In this study, the age ranges initially planned for sampling were abandoned and social workers were invited to consider involving any young person of school age, whom they knew very well and about whom they could complete a questionnaire quickly and comparatively easily. This was done because of the difficulties obtaining a sample. No other constraints were put upon the choice of young person. Once data had been collected, the sample would be split into 'educationally successful' and 'educationally unsuccessful' on the basis of the young people's SAT's results and their behaviour. The presence of risk and protective factors as in Figure 3 would then be compared across these two groups to test the research questions put forward after Study 1 (see 4.2.1).

4.3.2. Statistical Analysis

The two samples were compared using a two-sample design and analysed using non-parametric statistics. Non-parametric tests were used as the samples were small, data was ordinal (1 or 0) and was not normally distributed. A more cautious approach was therefore felt to be justified. The Mann Whitney U test was used to test each hypothesis.

4.3.3. Sample

Given the difficulty of obtaining a sample in Study 1, a different approach was taken in Study 3. The researcher attended team meetings for each of the social work teams, introduced the research and asked the social workers and social work assistants to think of a young person of statutory school age whom they knew well and could easily fill in a questionnaire about. They were asked to consider consent (see later). It was felt that the loss of any randomness in choosing the sample was worth sacrificing for the sake of gaining a sample which might be large enough for some statistical analysis to take place. Social workers appeared to feel that they needed to nominate a young person who was successful in education although the researcher emphasised that young people with attainments across the range would be helpful and that there were no criteria

apart from school age. The social workers were very interested although many expressed concern about the amount of time which they had to complete questionnaires and the pressure of court work, report writing and other duties. The service was also expecting an inspection by the Social Services Inspectorate in the near future (Autumn term, 2003) and there were still concerns about the level of staffing. Social Work Assistants were invited to take part as it was hoped that they might have more time. However, they did not appear to have the confidence to come forward.

The researcher spoke to the social workers in the Autumn term 2002 and immediately after Christmas with an initial timeline of return of the questionnaires by Easter 2002. This was extended to the end of July, given that few had been returned.

The researcher contacted colleagues in two neighbouring authorities to see if social workers in those authorities might be interested in participating. One social worker in one other authority agreed, but then was unable to complete the questionnaire as had been discussed. No feedback was received from the other authority.

The final sample from Study 3 alone consisted of only four young people, two boys and two girls, two in infant schools and two in secondary schools. The two young people in secondary schools had taken part in Study 2, the interview study (having been recruited through Study 3). This data set was complimented by questionnaires completed about the four young people in Study 1 and also by questionnaires completed about four young people from Study 2 (the interview study). These young people were asked at the end of their interview if they would be willing for their social workers and teachers to complete the questionnaires and they had agreed. The final sample therefore consisted of fourteen young people, eight girls and six boys. Please see Table F, Appendix 4.1.

4.3.4 Measures

The measures used were as follows:

4.3.4.1 Questionnaire C

This questionnaire was designed to be completed by the social worker for the young person participating in the study. It could also be completed by a key worker in a residential home. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-four questions in five main sections. Section 1 covered Background Information about the participant, Section 2, Self-Esteem, Section 3 Risk and Protective Factors, Section 4 Social Relationships and Section 5 Miscellaneous Questions.

Questionnaire C was identical to Questionnaire A as used in Study 1, but with some additional questions about the young person's entry into their current care placement, a question about their coping with being in care and a question about when they started reading. (Please see Appendix 4.2: Outline of the changes to the questionnaire and 4.3: Questionnaire C).

4.3.4.2. Questionnaire D

This questionnaire was designed to be completed by a teacher for the young person participating in the study, (see Appendix 4.4). It consisted of 17 questions in five main sections. The questions sought information about the young person's background, about their educational attainment and other attainments in school, about any special support which they had received in school, about their self esteem, their social relationships and finally some miscellaneous questions.

Questionnaire D was identical to Questionnaire B used in Study 1.

4.3.4.3 Questionnaire E (Teacher Scale) and Questionnaire F (Parent Scale), The Revised Rutter Scales (from Child Psychology Portfolio (CPP), Hogg, Rutter and Richman, 1997)

The Revised Rutter Scales are a revision of the original Rutter Parents' and Teachers' Scales incorporating prosocial items as well as emotional and conduct problems (see Appendix 4.5 and 4.6). They were used to gather additional information about the young people in terms of their behaviour in school and in the care placement.

The questionnaires consisted of 59 items (teacher scale) and 50 items (parent scale) which are completed by scoring a number of statements about the participants behaviour 'does not apply' through 'applies somewhat' to 'certainly applies'. The scale provides a total difficulties score, an emotional score, a conduct difficulties score, a hyperactivity / inattention score and a prosocial score. The CPP (Hogg, Rutter and Richman, 1997) describe the detailed reports of the psychometric properties of the original Rutter scales, although they acknowledge that information is not available on the form of the questionnaires used here.

Questionnaire E was sent to social workers (the parent scale) and questionnaire F was sent to teachers (the teacher scale) to complete about the participating young people where agreement to proceed with questionnaires had been forthcoming.

4.3.4.4. Questionnaire G - Locus of Control Scale (LCSC, (Nowicki (1973) from Child Psychology Portfolio, Sylva & Stevenson, 1997)

Questionnaire G, the Locus of Control Scale was completed by the young people who were interviewed. It was completed after the interview. It was used because Jackson and Martin (1998) had identified an internal Locus of Control as a protective factor for young people in care. It was then put forward as a within-child protective factor to be investigated in this research (see the Final Framework of Risk and Protective Factors, Figure 3).

The Locus of Control Scale (LCSC) is a 40 item paper and pencil self-report measure developed by Nowicki and Strickland (1973) to extend the measurement of locus of control to children (CPP, Sylva & Stevenson, 1997). The version used is that from the Child Psychology Portfolio with anglicised wording (see Appendix 4.7). The 40 items are rated yes or no by the participant and these are scored to give a total score. A high total score indicates an external locus of control and a low score indicates an internal locus of control. The CPP (Sylva & Stevenson, 1997) gives details of the evaluation of the LCSC and concludes that although its reliability is modest, "it has proved a sensitive indicator of locus of control and has been shown to be predictive of a range of aspects of child social and educational development" (p.34).

4.3.4.5 Interviews with the Young People

The young people were interviewed using the semi-structured interview proforma as in Study 2 (see Appendix 3.3). The analysis was carried out through categorising the transcripts, initially through answers to particular questions. Quantitative counting methods were used to summarise answers for each young person to contribute to Study 3. This involved a content-analysis approach, picking out whether specific risk and protective factors were present for each young person. Protective factors were rated as [+1] if present and [0] if absent and risk factors were rated as [-1] if present or [0] if absent. See Appendix 2.8 for a summary and key to the ratings used. Factors such as 'plans and aspirations' were scored as present or not, i.e. if the young person expressed a plan for the future, it was scored as present. No judgements were made as to the value or quality of the plan. 'Interested adult' and 'support for education in the care environment' were scored in the same way.

4.3.5. Procedure

For Study 3, social workers were asked to contact the researcher with the name of the young person whom they had nominated to participate, the young person's school and a link teacher who the researcher could speak to about the research. The researcher discussed consent with the social worker to ensure that parental consent had been gained where necessary and that the social worker had spoken to the young person. The researcher then talked to the link teacher about the research, gained agreement to complete the questionnaire and sent out those relevant to the social worker (C and F) and to the teacher (D and E) with a covering letter where necessary.

In practice, the researcher then spent the majority of the time between Christmas and the summer 2003 emailing and speaking to social workers, in some cases sending out several copies of the same questionnaire to the same social workers and contacting the team managers to ask them to remind their teams about the research. The researcher offered to meet with social workers to complete the questionnaires with them, through a structured interview, although this offer was not taken up. The researcher discussed whether she might be allowed access to the social work files to complete and fill in questionnaires herself. This was not

taken up by the social services managers. This was particularly frustrating as members of the Educational Psychology Service, including the researcher, had been given permission to do this in the past.

Eventually agreement was gained for the completion of twelve questionnaires by social workers and teachers for Study 3. Six of these participants were from the interview study (Study 2). In these cases, the young people were initially approached about taking part in the interview study, relevant consents were gained and then when the young people were interviewed they were asked by the researcher if they might agree to have the questionnaires sent out about them. One of the young people was not asked as he had said that he did not want his school involved in the research, another young woman was not asked as she was living independently and was not attending school. The other young people who were involved were agreeable to this. It appears that once the young people had agreed for this to take place, the social workers felt more beholden to take part. However, even in one of these cases, agreement was gained for the social worker to complete the questionnaires and then an email was received several weeks later saying that she was sorry she had not been more helpful but she was leaving that day. No information was given about whether the questionnaire had been completed, or passed on to a colleague to complete and no follow-up contact details were given.

Of the twelve agreements, only five questionnaires were received back from social workers (and one of these was completed by the residential worker after the social worker left the questionnaires with the residential home without due explanation). Six questionnaires were completed and sent back by teachers in schools and some on a very short deadline. The frustration of having people agree to complete questionnaires by a certain date, having received a stamped addressed envelope and then a reminder letter with an invitation to contact the researcher if there would be problem and then receiving nothing from them, was considerable. The amount of data held for analysis is therefore once again, limited. As outlined in 4.3.3. 'The Sample', the information gained from Study 1 and from Study 2 was added to that collected in this study so that quantitative analysis could be completed.

The sample of young people was split into an educationally successful group and an educationally unsuccessful group on the basis of three factors:

- Results in standardised attainment tests and National Curriculum Levels and with a definition of successful for these young people being “performing at the average level”.
- Whether the young person had a full-time educational placement
- Whether the young person had ever been excluded.

On the basis of these three factors, the sample did split into equal groups of seven young people, see Appendix 4.9 (Table J) and 4.4.1, Table 4.

Caution should be used in interpreting the results as the sample size was small (n=7 per comparison group) and as discussed previously the sample was not truly random due to the difficulty of obtaining a sample. However, the statistical analyses will be presented and discussed below.

4.3.6. Ethical Issues

4.3.6.1 Informed consent

Social workers were asked to consider informed consent for the young people and the involvement of the young people was discussed with them. The social workers were given a leaflet to give to the young people (see Appendix 4.8) which described a little about the research, gave them the researcher’s contact details and invited them to opt out if they wanted to. Social workers were asked to consider who needed to give parental consent in terms of who held parental responsibility for the young people. If the young person was subject to a care order it was agreed with the manager of Looked After Children Services in the authority that the social worker could give parental consent for participation. If it was appropriate the social worker was encouraged, as good practice, to seek birth family consent as well as discussing the research with carers. In the case of Len, the researcher spoke to the young person’s adoptive parents and sent them information about the research as well as liaising with the young person’s residential home. If the child was voluntarily accommodated the social worker was asked to seek parental consent from those with parental responsibility.

4.3.6.2 Confidentiality

The researcher outlined to the young people in the leaflet that the research would involve the young person's social worker and teacher completing questionnaires about them and about their experiences. It was outlined that the questionnaires would be confidential and anonymised so that no-one would know the answers apart from the social worker and teacher. It was emphasised that the researcher would know the answers, but not the specific young person that they were about as the questionnaires were coded. In practice, the researcher did initially know which information was about which young person, but the information was only used for the purposes of the research and once put together, the information was coded again with letters rather than social worker initials so that the individual young people could not be identified from the write-up of the results. All names are fabricated.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Introduction to the results

In totalling the information gained from the three studies, the following information was held about fourteen young people (please also see Table F, Appendix 4.1, The make-up of the final data set).

Table 3: Data back from social workers, teachers and interviews with young people in care

| Name | Social Worker Questionnaire [C] | Teacher Questionnaire [D] | Rutter Teacher Questionnaire [E] | Rutter Parent Questionnaire (SW) [F] | Locus of Control Measure [G] | Interview |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Carla | Y | Y | N* | N* | N* | N* |
| Tracy | Y | N | N* | N* | N* | N* |
| Kerry | Y | N | N* | N* | N* | N* |
| Niamh | Y | Y | N* | N* | N* | N* |
| David | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Celia | Y | Y | N | N | Y | Y |
| Bobby | Y | N | N | Y | Y | Y |
| Len | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y |
| Michelle | N* | N* | N* | N* | Y | Y |
| Robert | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Johnny | N* | N* | N* | N* | Y | Y |
| Penny | Y | N | N | Y | Y | Y |
| Jessie | N | Y | Y | N | N* | N* |
| Josh | N | Y | N | N | N* | N* |
| Total No. | 9 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 8 |

Y = Yes, information from questionnaire / interview gained

N = No, information from questionnaire / interview not gained

* = Questionnaires were not sent out or the young person was not nominated to take part in the interview study

The data from the different questionnaires and from the content-analysis of the interview transcripts was summarised and then rated in terms of each protective factor (present [+1] or absent [0]) and risk factor (present [-1] or absent [0]) for each young person. See Appendix 2.8 for a summary and key to the ratings used. Unfortunately the number of Rutter Questionnaires (E and F) and Locus of Control Questionnaires (G) completed did not allow for statistical analysis although the range of scores are summarised and discussed below. Factors such as 'plans and aspirations' are scored as present or not, as are 'interested adult' and 'support for education in the care environment'. Social orientation is scored as being a risk factor if the participants' average scores on peer relationships was 3 out of 8 or less (scored by social workers and designated teachers on a scale of 1 to 8 in school, in outside school activities and in the care placement). Where

scores on any factor were gained in more than one way, for example a score is given for social skills by a teacher and by a social worker, then the scores were averaged before it was decided whether it would rate as a risk factor or not. The same process was used for self-esteem, i.e. an average score of 3 or below out of 8 was scored as the risk factor being present (-1).

4.4.1.1 Inter-rater reliability of Questionnaires C and D

The inter-rater reliability of the questionnaires was calculated as in [study 1](#) (see 2.3.5.2) by having two raters analyse the same questionnaires using the methods for analysis described above and the key to the ratings used (see Appendix 2.8). The percentage of items on which the two raters agreed was then calculated. This was 94.3%.

4.4.1.2 The sample

The sample of young people was split into an 'educationally successful' group and an 'educationally unsuccessful' group on the basis of the three factors outlined in 4.3.5 'Procedure', participants in the 'successful' group having average results in SATs and National Curriculum Levels, a full-time educational placement and never having been excluded from school. On the basis of these three factors, the sample did split into equal groups of seven young people. Please see Appendix 4.9J for details of attainments, school places and exclusions.

Table 4: The make-up of the 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' groups

| 'Successful' | 'Unsuccessful' |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Kerry | Carla |
| Niamh | Tracy |
| Celia | David |
| Bobby | Michelle |
| Len | Robert |
| Johnny | Penny |
| Josh | Jessie |

The 'successful group' was therefore made up of three girls and four boys, the 'unsuccessful group' was made up of five girls and two boys. The average age of

the 'successful' group was 13.7 years and the average age of the 'unsuccessful' group was 13.8 years.

4.4.2 The Research Questions

The research questions will now be addressed in turn.

4.4.2.1 "How do young people in care who are 'educationally successful' in school compare to those who are not on a range of 10 **protective** (3 within-child, 2 within their pre-care environment, 3 within their care environment and 2 within their school environment) and 10 **risk** factors (3 within-child, 3 within their pre-care environment, 2 within their care environment and 2 within their school environment)?"

The number of risk and protective factors across the whole sample was distributed as in Table 5.

Table 5: The total and mean numbers of protective and risk factors present across the sample

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|------------------------------------|----|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| Total number of protective factors | 14 | 3 | 8 | 5.29 | 1.383 |
| Total number of risk factors | 14 | 0 | 7 | 4.00 | 2.449 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 14 | | | | |

It can be seen from Table 5 that all of the young people had at least three protective factors and some, up to 8 protective factors out of the 10 factors sampled. The range of risk factors fell between 0 and 7. The mean number of protective factors was greater than the mean number of risk factors for this sample.

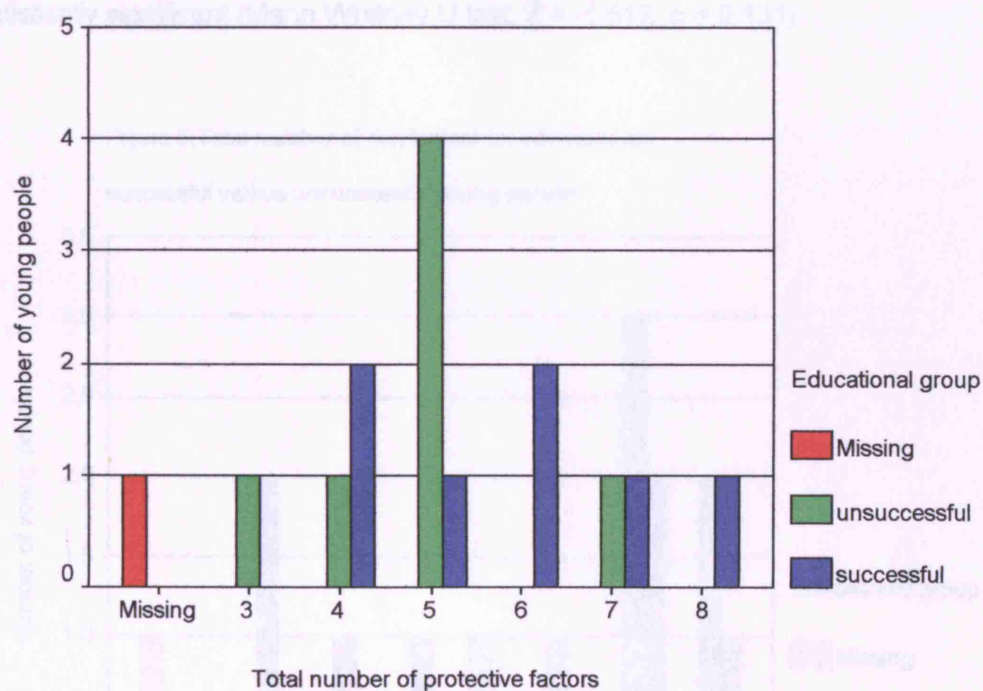
4.4.2.1.1 Young people in care who are 'educationally successful' will have a statistically significantly higher number of protective factors than those who are not.

Table 6: The total number of protective factors present for each group

| | Educational Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Mean number of protective factors | unsuccessful | 7 | 4.86 | 1.215 | .459 |
| | successful | 7 | 5.71 | 1.496 | .565 |

As can be seen in Table 6, the successful group did have a higher number of protective factors. However, the difference was not statistically significant (Mann Whitney U test, $Z = -1.053$, $p = 0.292$).

Figure 5 :Total number of protective factors for educationally successful compared to unsuccessful young people



4.4.2.2 "Is it possible to identify how some individual young people develop resilience (i.e. educational success) and how the factors in their lives interact with each other in the development of resilience?"

Specific Hypotheses

As before, in each pairing, the first hypothesis covers the protective factors in the framework and the second hypothesis covers the risk factors. Only results which were statistically significant or appeared to show a trend are included here. All of the results are considered more fully in the discussion.

Within-child factors

4.4.2.2.1 Young people in care educationally successful show a) internal loci of control, b) learned to read early and c) have plans and aspirations for the future

The samples for a) Locus of Control and for b) learned to read early were too small for analysis. However, the results for Locus of Control are presented below:

Table 8 : Locus of Control scores for the young people in care

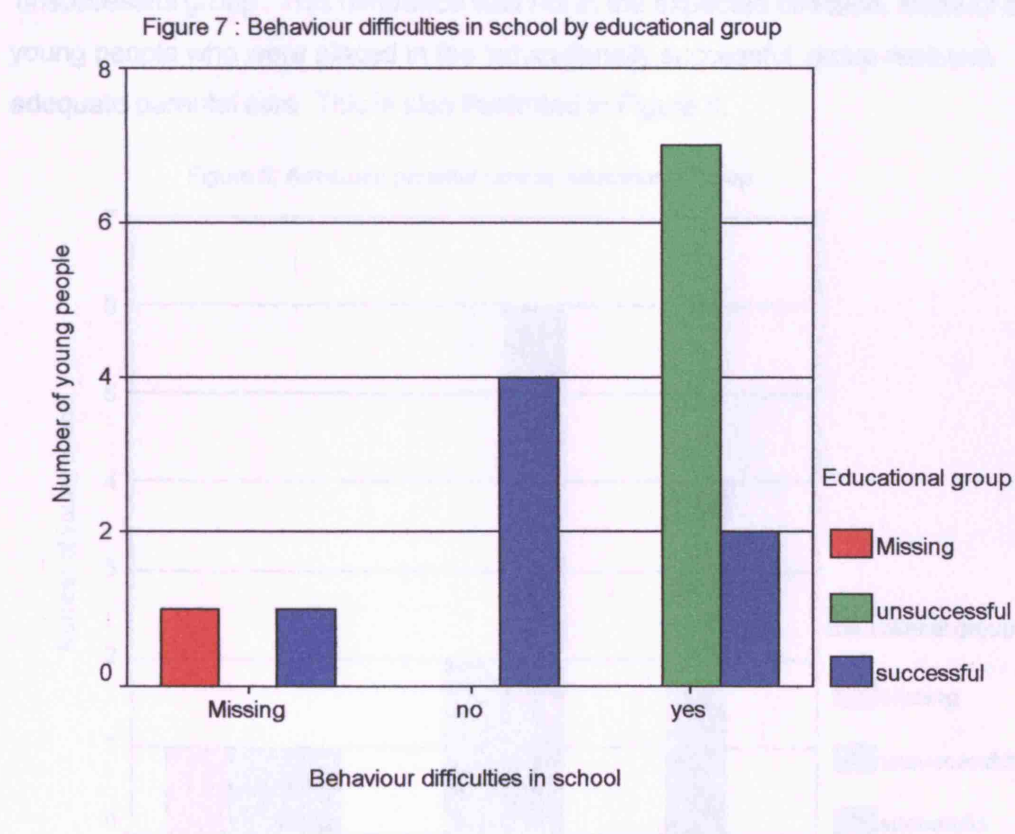
| Group | Participants | Individual Scores | Group mean |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Successful | Celia | 13 | 12.75 |
| | Bobby | 12 | |
| | Len | 8 | |
| | Johnny | 18 | |
| Unsuccessful | David | 24 | 19.0 |
| | Michelle | 20 | |
| | Robert | 13 | |
| | Penny | 19 | |

Although the groups were too small for statistical comparison, the mean for the 'successful group' is lower than that for the 'unsuccessful group', the 'unsuccessful group' having a more externalising score than the 'successful group'. This would be in line with research which shows that young people with high externalising scores are less likely to succeed in school. Whether there could be any linking causal factors here needs further research. For example, it could

be that young people in care tend to have higher externalising scores as they feel a lack of control over their own lives having been subject to meeting with professionals and having been moved often against their will. This higher externalising score could reflect issues which are then influencing the young people's success in their school careers.

4.4.2.2.2 Young people in care educationally successful do not have a) poor social skills, b) behaviour difficulties or c) low self-esteem.

The groups did differ on the behaviour difficulties factor, but given that the young people were assigned to groups partly on whether they had behaviour difficulties, this was expected.



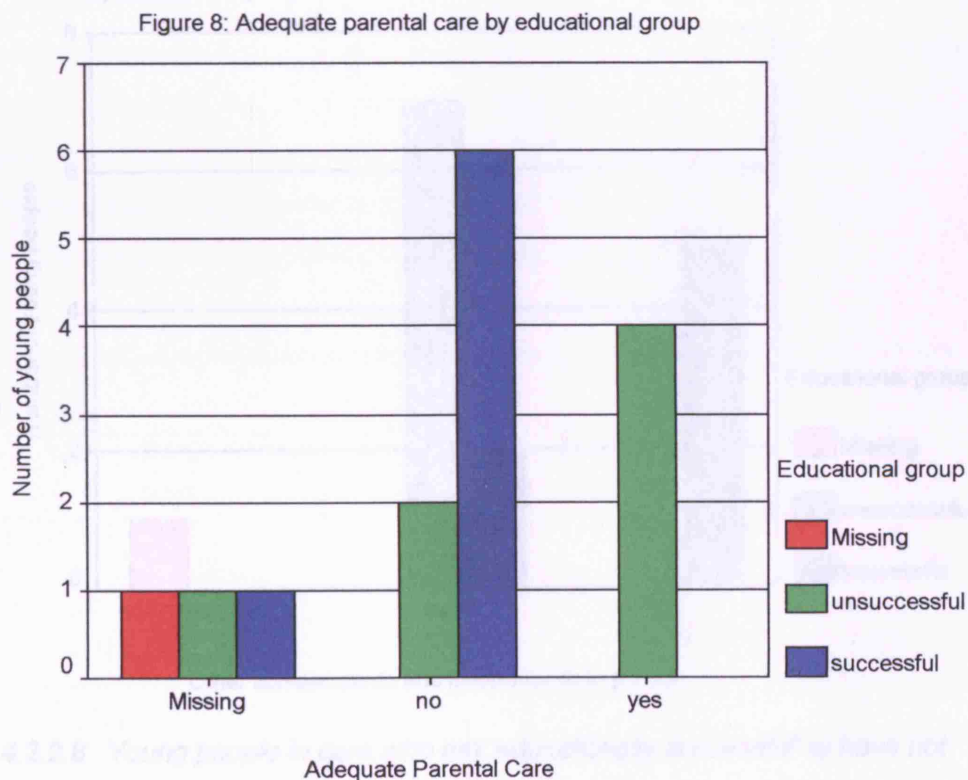
Environmental factors experienced before the child enters care

4.4.2.2.3 Young people in care who are 'educationally successful' a) received adequate parental care within their birth families and b) had a birth parent interested in their education.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics for the two groups related to the adequate parental care factor

| | Educational group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------------------------|-------------------|---|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Adequate parental care | unsuccessful | 6 | .67 | .516 | .211 |
| | successful | 6 | .00 | .000 | .000 |

It can be seen in Table 9 that there was a difference between the groups on the adequate parental care factor. This difference was statistically significant (Mann Whitney U test, $Z = -2.345$, $p = 0.019$). Less of the young people who were 'educationally successful' appear to have had adequate parental care than the 'unsuccessful group'. This difference was not in the expected direction. None of the young people who were placed in the 'educationally successful' group received adequate parental care. This is also illustrated in Figure 8.

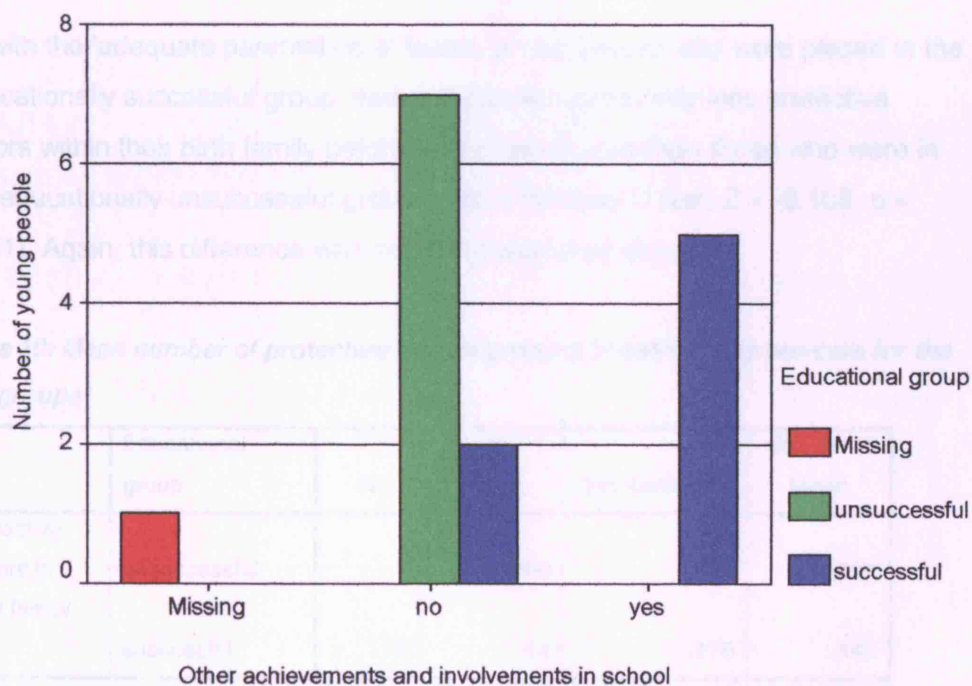


Environmental factors present for the looked after young person in their school placement.

4.4.2.2.7 Young people in care who are 'educationally successful' have a) an adult they feel they can talk to in school and b) have other achievements and involvements in school life.

More of the 'educationally successful' young people were found to have other achievements and involvements in school and these included being in school drama productions, being a peer supporter in the playground, representing the school in sports and being involved in clubs. The difference was statistically significant (Mann Whitney U test, $Z = -2.687$, $p = 0.007$). This is illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Achievements & involvements in school
by educational group



4.4.2.2.8 Young people in care who are 'educationally successful' a) have not been excluded from school and b) have not truanted or shown significant periods of non-attendance.

There were significant differences between the two groups on these two factors with the 'educationally unsuccessful' group having had more exclusions (Mann

Whitney U test, $Z = -2.958$, $p = 0.003$). This was expected as this factor was one of the issues used in the final analysis to split the two groups into 'educationally successful' and 'unsuccessful'.

More of the unsuccessful group had truanted from school and again this difference was significant (Mann Whitney U test, $Z = -2.494$, $p = 0.013$).

4.4.2.3 "If specific factors or causal mechanisms are identified, do these fall within a specific microsystem for the young person, (e.g., home, birth family, school, peers, within-child)?"

Specific Hypotheses

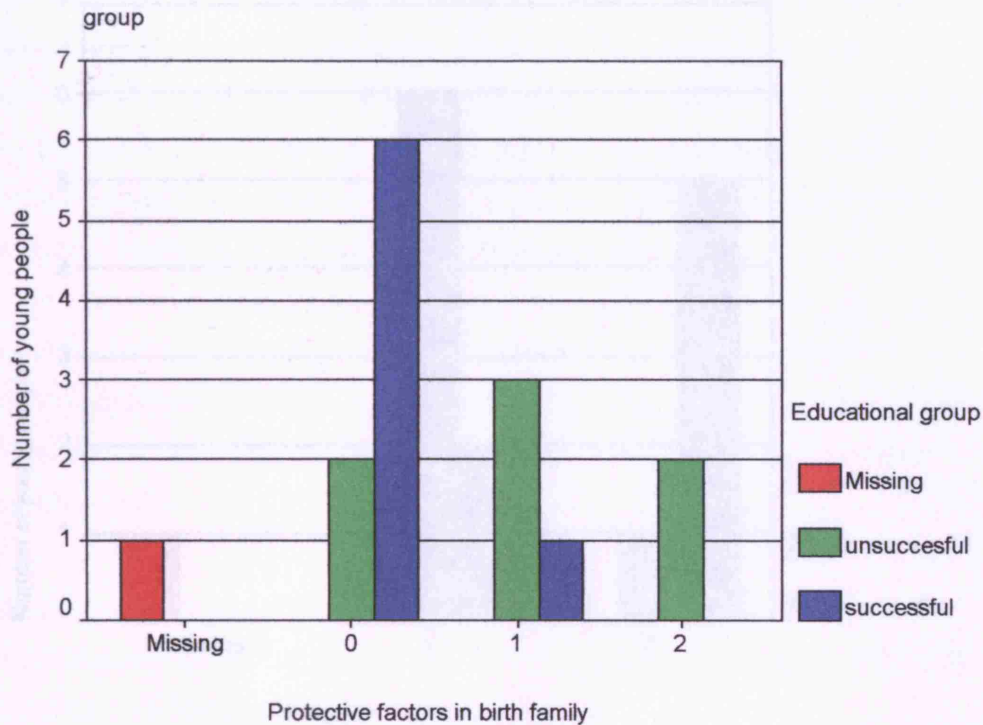
4.4.2.3.1 Young people in care with protective factors from within their birth family are more likely to be 'educationally successful'.

As with the 'adequate parental care' factor, young people who were placed in the 'educationally successful group' had statistically significantly less protective factors within their birth family before they entered care than those who were in the 'educationally unsuccessful group' (Mann Whitney U test, $Z = -2.155$, $p = 0.031$). Again, this difference was not in the expected direction.

Table 10: Mean number of protective factors present in birth family pre-care for the two groups

| | Educational group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Protective factors in birth family | unsuccessful | 7 | 1.00 | .816 | .309 |
| | successful | 7 | .14 | .378 | .143 |

Figure 10 : Protective factors in birth family by educational



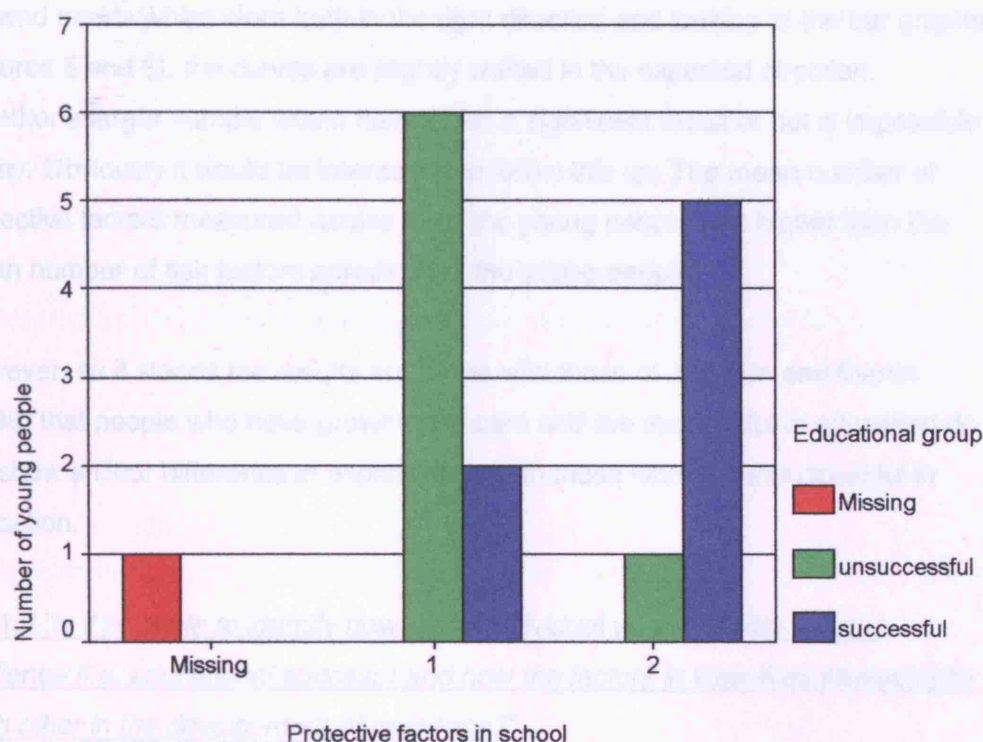
4.4.2.3.2 Young people in care with protective factors from within their school placement are more likely to be 'educationally successful'.

Table 11: Incidence of protective factors within the school for the two groups

| | Educational group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Protective factors in school | unsuccessful | 7 | 1.14 | .378 | .143 |
| | successful | 7 | 1.71 | .488 | .184 |

It can be seen in Table 11 that the young people who were assigned to the 'educationally successful group' had more protective factors within their school environments (Mann Whitney U test, $Z = -2.082$, $p = 0.037$) than the 'educationally unsuccessful' young people. This is also illustrated in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Protective factors in school by educational group



4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 Addressing the Research Questions

In addressing the research questions and specific hypotheses put forward and given the stated cautions about interpretation due to the small sample size and the unrepresentativeness of the sample, some significant results were found. Each research question will be considered in turn.

4.5.1.1 "How do young people in care who are 'educationally successful' in school compare to those who are not on a range of 10 **protective** (3 within-child, 2 within their pre-care environment, 3 within their care environment and 2 within their school environment) and 10 **risk** factors (3 within-child, 3 within their pre-care environment, 2 within their care environment and 2 within their school environment)?"

In addressing the first research question which looked at whether young people who were successful in school had more protective factors in their lives and less

risk factors, both of these results were non-significant. However, the results showed trends which were both in the right direction and looking at the bar graphs (Figures 5 and 6), the curves are slightly shifted in the expected direction. Whether a larger sample would have given a significant result or not is impossible to say. Obviously it would be interesting to follow this up. The mean number of protective factors measured across all of the young people was higher than the mean number of risk factors across all of the young people.

However, as it stands the results are in line with those of Jackson and Martin (1998) that people who have grown up in care and are successful in education do not show a clear difference in experiences than those who are unsuccessful in education.

4.5.1.2 "Is it possible to identify how some individual young people develop resilience (i.e. educational success) and how the factors in their lives interact with each other in the development of resilience?"

The second research question looked at the distribution of different risk and protective factors across the two groups and specifically looked for differences between the successful and unsuccessful groups. Again, non-parametric independent two sample tests were used to compare the means of the two groups for the different factors. Some significant results were found which will be discussed.

4.5.1.2.1 Within-child factors

4.5.1.2.1.1 Protective factors

In terms of the within child protective factors, the sample where *the Locus of Control Measure* was available was too small for statistical analysis ($n = 4$ per comparison group). However, in looking at the distribution of scores, it was interesting to note that all of the young people apart from one had at least the mean score on the locus of control measure, rising to an externalising score. Only one of the young people had an internal locus of control score. There was a trend for the successful group to have less externalising scores than the unsuccessful group and this trend warrants further investigation. This would be in line with

research which shows that young people with high externalising scores are less likely to succeed in school. Whether there could be any linking causal factors here needs further research.

The sample for '*Learned to Read Early*' was also too small for analysis. There was no significant difference between the groups on the '*planfulness and aspirations*' factor, the young people who were 'educationally unsuccessful' had a similar level of planning and thoughts for the future as the 'educationally successful' young people.

4.5.1.2.1.2. Risk Factors

For the within child risk factors, significantly more of the young people who were 'educationally unsuccessful' did have *behaviour difficulties* as measured by exclusions, comments about poor behaviour in school and a high Rutter Total or Rutter Conduct score. However, given that group membership of the 'unsuccessful group' was partly determined by behaviour (exclusion and truancy) then the fact that there was a significant difference between the two groups is not surprising. It does, to some extent validate that the two groups were different in terms of their behaviour which contributes to educational success in the definition used here. The group differences relating to *social skills* and *self esteem* as rated by social workers and teachers were not significant, (i.e. young people educationally unsuccessful were not rated as having poorer social skills or lower levels of self-esteem than those who were successful).

4.5.1.2.2 Birth Family Factors

4.5.1.2.2.1 Protective Factors

For the birth family protective factors, it was found that significantly fewer of the successful young people experienced *adequate parental care* within their birth families than did the educationally unsuccessful young people. In fact, none of the successful group had experienced adequate care compared to four out of seven of the unsuccessful group. This factor was rated on the young person's account of the care they received in terms of parental responsibility for them, feeding, clothing and love provided. This would suggest that young people's early

experiences do not necessarily dictate how they perform in school and that it may be how they adapt and formulate those early experiences into something with which they can cope and how they then move forward which is key to their success. This would be interesting to explore further. This pattern of thinking would fit in with Rutter's views of young people developing resilience through successful adaptation and coping with difficult life experiences. What else was supportive in these young people's lives which helped them to adapt? What reasoning and coping strategies did they use and what patterns of attributions were helping them to cope and succeed? In contrast, what was occurring for the less successful young people that, after a more positive start, they were then experiencing more difficulties in school. This will be explored further in the final discussion section, drawing together themes arising from the interview study with questions arising here. This is an area for further work and would lend itself better to a more in-depth interviewing procedure than to a questionnaire study as used here.

No significant difference was found between the two groups on the factor relating to their *birth parents' interest in their education*.

4.5.1.2.2 Risk Factors

Considering the risk factors present within their birth families, no significant differences were found between the two groups on any of the factors, (i.e. the groups did not differ in terms of the number of young people having *parents with mental health problems, with drug or alcohol abuse within the home or experiencing child maltreatment*). However, as discussed in the literature review, different outcomes are expected for children who experience different types of maltreatment, chronicity and frequency of abuse episodes and so simply asking whether abuse had occurred within their family, may have obscured real interactions. With such a small sample, it would have been impossible to look at more detailed relationships statistically in any case.

4.5.1.2.3. Care Placements

No significant differences were found between the two groups for the presence of protective or risk factors within their care placements.

4.5.1.2.4 School Placements

4.5.1.2.4.1 Protective Factors

For protective factors within their school placements, more of the 'educationally successful' young people were found to have more '*other achievements*' in school and to be involved in other activities. These included representing the school at sports, being involved in drama productions, musical activities and being a peer supporter or listener. Whether this relationship was cause or effect is impossible to say, (i.e. were the young people more involved in school because they were more successful or were they more successful because they were more involved?) This debate highlights the difficulty with the definition of resilience used – i.e. using a definition which looks solely at school performance. It can be argued that being successful in school is a protective factor rather than being the 'end product' in terms of resilience. Again, this issue will be considered more fully in the overall discussion.

4.5.1.2.4.2 Risk Factors

In terms of the risk factors within the school environment, there were more 'educationally unsuccessful' young people *excluded from school* and involved in *truancy*. However, as indicated earlier, this was expected as group membership was contributed to by these factors. It would be interesting to separate school achievement from these factors and then to look for a difference but it was not possible in this study given the small sample and incomplete educational data set.

4.5.1.3 "If specific factors or causal mechanisms are identified, do these fall within a specific microsystem for the child, (e.g., home, birth family, school, peers, within-child)?"

This research question considered whether the distribution of protective factors within different microsystems for the young person was important. The two groups were found to differ significantly on the *protective factors present in their birth families* with the 'educationally successful' group experiencing significantly less protective factors than their 'educationally unsuccessful' peers. This result will have been contributed to by the significant result discussed earlier for the

'adequate parental care' factor. Only one of the educationally successful young people experienced a protective factor in their birth family as opposed to three of the unsuccessful experiencing one, and two of the unsuccessful experiencing two protective factors within their birth families. These protective factors were adequate parental care and parental interest in education.

No difference was found between the two groups on the *protective factors present in their care placements*.

The *school protective factors* did show a statistically significant result with more of the educationally successful young people experiencing protective factors within their school placement than the educationally unsuccessful young people. These included the factors 'other achievements and involvements in school' (discussed earlier) and 'having an adult they feel they can talk to in school'.

4.5.1.4 Summary

In summary, the main findings from Study 3 are that the 'educationally successful' young people experienced less protective factors in their birth family environment than the 'educationally unsuccessful' group – specifically related to adequate parental care. They then experienced more protective factors within their school environment, particularly related to their achievements and involvements in school. Significantly more of the 'unsuccessful group' did show behaviour problems, had been excluded from school and had truanting, but this was expected in that these factors contributed to the decision about which young people were placed in which educational group. There was a trend for the unsuccessful young people to have more externalising Locus of Control scores and this warrants further investigation.

4.5.2 Limitations of the Study

4.5.2.1 The Sample Size and the procedure for gaining a sample

As in Study 1, the main difficulty encountered was in obtaining an adequate sample. After Study 1, the procedure had been changed so that many of the constraints to obtaining a sample in Study 1 had been removed. However, finally obtaining a sample relied upon social workers and teachers making the time and

prioritising the questionnaires and, despite prompts and reminders, very few were forthcoming. It was particularly frustrating that colleagues had said that they were happy to participate and then never returned questionnaires. From the researcher's point of view it would have been preferable for them to have refused to take part in the first place, as time and effort would have been saved and an alternative means of gaining a sample could have been identified.

Once the route to the young people through the drama group was identified for Study 2 (the interview study), the process was eased. These young people were happy to participate and all who were asked, apart from one, were happy, having met the interviewer, for information to go forward to the Study 3 through completion of questionnaires C, D, E and F. One young woman chose to withdraw from the study as a whole having felt uncomfortable with the information she had disclosed (see Study 2, Ethical Considerations). It may be preferable in future work to identify a group of young people, like the drama group, perhaps starting with the residential homes, gaining consent from appropriate adults and from the young people and then approaching the social workers and teachers for the detailed information. Some of the teachers were not approached until the penultimate week of the school year and this may have affected the response rate, although again, they all verbally agreed to complete the questionnaires and send or fax them back before the end of term.

4.5.2.2 The Questionnaire Design

On the whole, the questionnaires did elicit the information sought although they were not always completed in the detail required. It may be that the length of the questionnaires made them unwieldy and this may have contributed to the poor return rate. Although feedback was requested in Study 1 from social workers and teachers who completed the questionnaires, perhaps a wider telephone survey to follow-up some of those who completed and some of those who did not complete would have highlighted issues about the questionnaire design which could then have been taken forward to Study 3.

In terms of the actual completion of the questionnaires, some teachers referred the researcher to the young person's Personal Education Plan although these were not actually held by the researcher and so the information was not

necessarily available. In two cases, the social worker for the young person changed during the study which meant that the social worker did not have the information available to complete the questionnaire. This information would presumably have been held on file so whether it was just that the worker did not then have the time to sort through the file for the information is not clear. The educational data available for these young people was, in most cases, better than for Study 1. In some cases however, SATs results and National Curriculum Levels were not held. The Education of Children in Public Care Team was able to help for some of the young people as they held information centrally. However, for several of the young people, this was not available. For Study 3, this meant that the definition of 'educational success' could not be done solely by attainment results as was originally intended and the factor of full-time school placements and lack of exclusions was included. This did have implications for the hypothesis testing around risk factors for school which included the exclusions factor. Some of the individual factors were difficult to assign as present or absent for example adequate parental care and planfulness and aspirations and it was difficult to assign a clear meaning label to these factors. The maltreatment factor is acknowledged to be over-simplistic in only looking at the presence or absence of any type of abuse within the birth family. Abuse was categorised by type but not by chronicity, frequency or the identity of the perpetrator which may all have affected the child's recovery and subsequent adaptation to the experience of the abuse (Widom, 2000).

4.5.2.2 The Research Design

With hindsight, it may have been more valuable to have chosen to leave the quantitative approach to this research and to have followed-up the interview study with more in-depth interviews, returning to one or two of those individuals already interviewed, or to have widened the sample. As it was, the difficulties in gaining an adequate sample may suggest that this survey approach is not really suitable for this vulnerable group of young people, in terms of the sensitive nature of gaining consent and of filling-in the questionnaires which contained quite detailed information about the particular young people. Actual interviews with the social workers may have elicited more of the information in a structured setting, although the researcher's hunch is that there would have been similar difficulties accessing the social workers and many of them who were carrying too many cases or had

recently taken on cases, would not have had the familiarity with the young people to answer many of the questions without referring to the young people's files in any case. The suitability of the actual research design in terms of the quantitative approach will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Five, (5.2 Limitations of the studies and suggestions for improvements).

There may be issues with the validity of the findings related to the definitions of 'educational resilience' used and the labelling of the individual young people as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful'. For some young people, for example those having a statement for learning difficulties, they may be judged for the purposes of this study as being 'unsuccessful' (i.e. not attaining at the average national level for a young person of their age) although they may be making excellent progress in relation to what is expected of them as an individual. Therefore this approach is over-simplistic.

Finally, as explored in the literature review and aims of the research, this quantitative approach is acknowledged to be over-simplistic in not allowing any exploration of the factors in one individual young person's life. However, the questions raised by this study will be considered alongside the qualitative data from the interview study in Chapter Five to consider the research questions, the implications of the research and areas for future study in more detail.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Addressing the Research Questions

Pulling together the results of Studies 2 and 3, we can now consider the research questions and the Final Framework of Risk and Protective Factors (Figure 3, Section 2.5) in more detail and relate findings and themes arising back to the review of the literature.

5.1.1 The number of risk and protective factors in young people's lives

Referring to the Framework as described in Figure 3, the first research question looked at whether children who are 'educationally successful' have more protective factors in their lives and / or more risk factors in their lives as suggested by Cicchetti and Toth (1998). In Study 3, this was not found to be the case (i.e. analysis of the data testing this hypothesis were not found to yield statistically significant results) although there did appear to be a trend for all of the young people to have more protective factors than risk factors. This would appear to be positive for these young people. Were the balance to be in the opposite direction, they would be likely to be at a greater risk of developing psychopathology. However, only certain factors were studied in this research and so the young people may have had other factors, either protective or risk factors, occurring in their lives at the same time which were not measured and analysed in this thesis.

5.1.2 Specific effects of different factors

The interactions of factors and specific effects of different factors were then considered in the second research question, in order to try and identify how some individual young people develop resilience (i.e., in this study, 'educational success') and how the factors in their lives interact with each other in the development of resilience. This question was addressed by both Study 2, the qualitative study and by Study 3, the quantitative study.

5.1.2.1 Within-child factors

Unfortunately due to the limitations of the sample size, even having put together information available on the young people involved in all three studies, some of the factors could not be considered statistically, for example, '*Learned to read early*' and '*Locus of Control*'.

The results for the '*Locus of Control*' measure were of interest despite this. There was a trend for the 'educationally successful' group to have more internalising scores than the 'unsuccessful' group. This finding would be in line with that of Jackson and Martin (1998) where the high achievers were found to have more internal loci of control and in the study of Werner and Smith (1982) where a characteristic of the resilient children in middle childhood was an internal Locus of Control. This is an area worthy of further investigation.

5.1.2.2 Within the birth family (pre-care environment)

The sample was large enough for the '*Adequate care*' factor to be analysed statistically and this did suggest that for the sample of young people, less of the 'educationally successful' group had adequate care in their birth families, (i.e. the 'unsuccessful' group were better 'looked after' by their birth families before they entered care). There was no significant difference between the groups in terms of the specific risk factors encountered – alcohol and drug abuse, child maltreatment and parental mental health problems, although many of the young people had encountered these risks in their pre-care lives and their descriptions of their experiences illustrated these. Overall though, there were statistically significantly more of the 'unsuccessful' group with protective factors within their birth families than of the 'successful' group. This was in contrast to the research put forward by Aldgate et al (1992) who suggested that children who were removed from their families because of poor parenting were likely to experience poorer outcomes than those who were removed because of parental illness or hardship. In this research, the young people who were perceived to have received the 'poorer' parenting were more successful.

One possible hypothesis which could explain this surprising result would be that the young people in this sample who experienced poorer care could have

developed better coping strategies or put more energy into doing well in school or perhaps found support systems outside of the family, which then enabled them to 'survive' their pre-care experiences, move successfully through the care system and be more 'successful in school'? This hypothesis would have needed further research with this particular group of young people to see if any of the above could have accounted for this apparent 'success'.

In exploring other reasons for this result, it is worth considering what the '*Adequate parental care*' factor actually means in this research. Of the seven young people in the 'educationally successful' sample, two of the young people had been removed because of clear neglect, one had been accommodated because of financial difficulties on the part of her father and lack of housing (her mother was in prison), and two were taken into care because of neglect and abuse. The reasons for the last two young people were not clear. In the 'unsuccessful group', the young people were taken into care because of desertion by parents, bereavements and then an inability to cope, a mother with mental health problems, abuse and for two of the young people, they were accommodated at the request of their parents because they were beyond parental control. Whether their poor behaviour was partly contributed to by poor parenting was not measured by this study. The picture is therefore unlikely to be as clear as the analysis suggests in that what constitutes '*Adequate parental care*' was not laid down very clearly and was taken, in part, as a judgement based on what was said by young people and by social workers.

The interaction between poverty, large families, child abuse and an inability on the part of the parents to provide care, was not really explored in enough detail to give a clear picture. However, in the interview study, a large proportion of the sample had experienced parental absence from the family home on the part of at least one parent, either because of separation of the parents, a parent being in prison, desertion by a parent or bereavement. Therefore before the young people entered care, many of them had been part of a single-parent family.

No clear relationship was found between '*Parental interest in education*' and educational success as suggested by Pilling (1990), Osborn (1990) and Weiner and Weiner (1990). One of the successful young people was very clear that her parents prioritised education and she was living with her father having been in and

out of care previously. Her mother had followed adult education classes and had gone on to further education later in her own life. So, whether parental participation in education is also linked with this factor could also, in future research be a variable to be explored. Another young person (from the 'unsuccessful' group) said that his Dad had tried to help him (his mother having passed away), but could not read well enough to help. Osborn (1990) had found that a child's chances of being labelled within the 'exceptional group' within his study were reduced by having a Mother who was a poor reader. If this is taken as a primary caregiver then this young man would fit in with this description. He was also attending a school for young men with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and as being in a school with pupils of high ability was also seen as 'beneficial', he would not have been likely to have been receiving any 'boost' from his peer group in terms of educational attainment either. There was therefore a very wide range of experiences, both of children receiving support and of parents being educated enough to be able to support.

From the interview study, *contact with birth families* was a key theme. Young people found this very supportive where it was present and found it hindered them in coping where it was absent. It would be interesting to look at this factor in terms of identity formation for the young people. A lack of contact with birth family would be likely to reduce the knowledge that young people had about who they were and where they came from and would also decrease their opportunities of having someone from their birth family interested in their education which Osborn (1990), Pilling (1990) and Weiner and Weiner (1990) all found to be protective.

Sinclair, Baker, Wilson and Gibb (forthcoming, cited in the Children Act report, 2002) found that qualitatively, children who remained fond of their birth family whilst maintaining some distance, who had 'moved on' were most successful in school. The challenge for practitioners would appear to be supporting these young people in working through issues and helping them to reach a point where they feel ready to 'move on', whenever that might be.

5.1.2.3 Within the care placement

In terms of risk and protective factors present within the young people's care placements, again no statistically significant differences between the groups were

found. All of the young people had somewhere to do their homework and had an adult interested in their schoolwork within their care placement, this was usually a foster carer or a residential worker (*'Interest and support for leaning in the care environment'*). There was a range of experiences around friendships and whether friends were in care or not, no clear conclusions could be drawn although the interview study did suggest some interesting themes. One of the young people talked about using friendships and her social life as her means of escaping from home and from what had happened to her. Her friendships were a way of receiving social support – seen as a protective factor by Cicchetti and Toth (1998). This young woman was labelled as successful. Another young woman had had difficulties with friendships having experienced many different school moves and had then sought support from her only trusted friends when she had experienced a particularly traumatic event. This support had not been forthcoming and she talked of friendships not being truly supportive, of not trusting anyone and of everyone being out for themselves. Her experience had taught her that friendships were not necessarily a means of accessing support and she had withdrawn from the availability of this protective factor, seeing herself as the one who was strong, had coped with lots in the past and could now therefore cope with anything. Other young people described using friends for social support more superficially in terms of playing football and doing normal peer group activities, whereas others had a few close friends but were otherwise teased, avoided or were subject to inappropriate over-friendly peer group advances because of their care status.

There was no significant difference between the groups in terms of the *'Number of care placements'* which they had had although for some young people it was very high. It had been hypothesised that the 'unsuccessful' group would have experienced more changes of care placements as a high number of care placements is seen as being a risk factor for educational underachievement for young people in care (Jackson & Martin, 1998). Changes of school and lack of stability of care was commented on in the interview study by several young people and having stayed in the same place or at the same school was named as something which had helped by social workers and young people. The fact that at least one of the young people was being taxied across the county suggested that school continuity was being taken seriously in the authority. *'Being in residential care'* did not appear to be a significant risk factor for young people and although in

the interview study some young people talked about difficulties settling in, peer group issues and the cultures within the homes, others appeared to see the homes as havens where they could settle, concentrate on schoolwork and move on. The support for education which was highlighted was very good and the researcher's experience of working with the homes was also very positive. Workers knew the young people well, were easily accessible and had a positive view of the schools. This was reciprocated in these young people's cases by the schools commenting positively about the residential homes.

5.1.2.4 Within schools

The experiences of the young people in schools were generally positive. All of the young people talked about having someone to talk to in school (Catterall, 1998), of receiving support for reading and spelling, and in fewer cases, for behaviour. Six of these young people had been excluded from school at some point because of their behaviour, one permanently. This represents a percentage of 43%. Two of the young people (14%) were statemented, one for Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

Statistically significantly more of the successful young people were involved in *other activities in school and had other achievements*, agreeing with Catterall (1998). These included peer support activities, sporting achievements, music and drama. As discussed in Study 3, whether this was an effect of young people being successful in school or was a contributory causal factor is unclear. The issues of the young people who were less successful having significantly more behaviour problems, more exclusions from school and having truanted more are again highlighted in Study 3 and will be referred to below as a constraint of the study. The fact that difficulties were encountered gaining the educational data from the sample, means that behaviour was added to the resilience definition (although the two were likely to be factors that interacted anyway). This did mean that analysis of behaviour problems and the risk factors within school became rather redundant as the young people were assigned to the group on the basis of the set factors and therefore differences were expected.

5.2 Limitations of the Studies and Suggestions for Improvements

5.2.1 *The conceptual basis of this thesis*

This thesis aimed to investigate the educational attainment of children in care, using a risk and resilience framework, as described in Chapter One (1.7). The work was based upon a framework of risk and protective factors developed from the research of Jackson and Martin (1998) which in turn drew on the research around resilience (e.g. Rutter, 1990).

Resilience as a construct has some difficulties as discussed in Section 1.6 and some of these limitations are acknowledged to have influenced this research. It should be acknowledged that the notion of 'resilience' is a conceptually complex one and as the researcher had more opportunity to reflect and re-read the work, further difficulties with the conceptualisation of the thesis arose. These are now used as means of critiquing the work and for informing further work in this area.

In considering the theoretical concerns around resilience, Luthar et al (2000) argued for future research in resilience to be carried out within a "clearly delineated theoretical framework within which hypotheses about salient vulnerability and protective processes are considered vis-à-vis the specific adversity under study", (p.555). The research reported within this thesis was carried out within the theoretical background of the resilience research and built upon the framework put forward by Jackson and Martin (1998). However, in hindsight there was no clear conceptual model to guide the research. This was partly due to the nature of the research being quite exploratory as there has been little *psychological* research into the *educational attainments* of young people in care and hence there is, as yet, no theoretical model which is explicit to the situation of young people in care. Luthar et al's (2000) guidance suggest that future research needs to focus on a specific variable already identified as important for a particular group and then to consider the mechanisms through which such a protective factor has its effect. In hind-sight, it would have been more valuable and theoretically more sound to have chosen a small number of the variables identified by Jackson and Martin (1998) and to have studied these in more depth for individual young people to try and elucidate the protective mechanisms underlying their effects.

5.2.2 The research design

In reflecting on the initial rationale for this research and the design chosen, a number of issues can be identified. The quantitative approach taken to addressing some of the research questions aimed to search for factors general to the whole group of young people in care. It aimed to “say how reality hangs together...or how it may be changed to be more effective” (Cohen, Manion and Morison, 2000). However, it is recognised from the literature review, that although this approach is taken in resilience research, it is undertaken with large scale studies based on national databases and is rarely undertaken with smaller scale questionnaire studies. Rutter (1990) highlighted that the underlying risk mechanisms need to be understood and that it needs to be ensured that the individuals being studied are exposed to the same level of risk factors so that it is known that those who are more successful are not just exposed to a lower dosage of the risk. Within the quantitative studies in this research, it was not possible to take any account of the level and dosage of the risks encountered by the young people. For example, for maltreatment, information was not collected about the timing or duration of the abuse which the young people were subjected to. Also, given the lack of previous psychological research with this particular group of young people, there is no current model of the underlying risk mechanisms. Considering this, it may be fair to say that the quantitative approach is, at least in part, problematic.

A more useful approach given the scope of this thesis might have been to focus on the other resilience research which points to studying individual pathways and life trajectories and looking for how the protective mechanisms work within individual young people's lives, identifying interactions between factors and turning points in individual's lives. It would not seem to be useful to try and identify general rules for this population of young people within applied research, but would be more achievable to look at the experiences and to understand the situations of individual young people. On reflection, having completed the research and written it up in this thesis, a qualitative approach would have been appropriate to a focused study of resilience and to the timeline available. Approaches could have included open-ended interviews, perhaps based on a Grounded Theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) allowing for the development of theories as interviewing and analysis proceeded. Focus groups, observation and case studies could also have contributed to the building up of a

picture of the experiences of the young people in terms of risk and protective factors and their interactions.

At the end of this research, reflection on the features of qualitative research outlined by Cohen et al (2000) ring true, including the following. Situations are fluid with events and behaviour evolving over time and being richly influenced by context; individuals are largely non-generalisable; people interpret events, contexts and situations and act on the bases of these events; reality is multi-layered and complex and many events are not reducible to simplistic interpretation (based on p. 22). A more interpretative approach without the external structure would have provided a richer picture for the research.

On reflection, the researcher feels that given her own history of studying experimental psychology and having participated previously in quantitative research, she lead herself too strongly in the direction of a quantitative study and was not initially open to looking at an alternative qualitative approach. The overall thesis now encompasses both, but perhaps having lost the depth of analysis which could have been achieved given a purely qualitative approach. This is a learning point for the individual researcher who now feels more able and more confident to embark upon a qualitative approach to research having gained a clearer understanding of the rationale behind such work and having had the experience of trialling some methodologies. Working alongside an experienced qualitative researcher would be a valuable experience.

Overall, the planning of the research did not fulfil the requirement of bringing together “the planned possibilities with workable, coherent practice” (Cohen et al, 2000, p.73). On reflection, what was planned was not actually likely to work within a local authority in a shire county of England given the current climate of restructuring, the Victoria Climbié Enquiry and repeated inspections by the Social Services Inspectorate. At the time, the researcher and the supervisory team at the University felt that the researcher’s specialist role would allow for easier access to a sample of young people in care and their social workers. However, in the end this was not the case.

5.2.3 The quantitative studies (Studies 1 and 3)

5.2.3.1 Gaining a sample

It was acknowledged at the beginning of the research that the approach to the research questions was simplistic, both in terms of taking a quantitative counting approach to the presence and absence of risk and protective factors and to the structuring of the factors into a theoretical framework involving within child and environmental factors. However, it was felt that structure needed to be given to the studies. This approach aimed to look at the occurrence of risk and protective factors in young people's lives. However, it was not very successful given the small size of the sample obtained. The studies highlighted in the literature review all consisted of large samples, primarily drawn from longitudinal national studies and data collections. Even the modest sample which was initially aimed for (36 young people) was not obtained due to difficulties recounted in studies 1 and 3.

As discussed in Chapter Four (section 4.5.2.1) gaining access to a sample of young people in care may be easier if a specific group is identified and approached, for example young people living in a residential home or within foster care in a certain area, and agreement is gained for participation before approaching social workers for information. Obviously, the issue of consent would need to be carefully considered so that young people were not told they could take part by a researcher before a social worker or birth parent then refused to give consent. Young people in care have more adults involved with them and with responsibility for them than most young people and this needing to 'go through' more people adds to the difficulty of obtaining a sample of participants who would like to take part in research.

Alternatively, an even more quantitative approach could be taken whereby a file search is undertaken with a checklist of the risk and protective factors being studied and the research could be completed solely on this basis. Although this would require a great deal of time on the part of the researcher, the size of the sample would be within the control of the researcher and would be dependent on the amount of time available and the agreement of social workers to release their files. This level of research would need to be considered within the constraints of the validity of the information held on file and there would be limits as to the

usefulness of the data given the discussions above about the appropriateness of a quantitative approach to this area of research. However, given the constraints it could be a useful way of gaining a further picture alongside a more individual approach to young people.

It may be possible, especially given the current agenda for sharing information and for multi-agency working, for a researcher to gain access to a local authority's databases –both educational and related to social care where these continue to be separate. Again, this might allow for the study of a wider group of children, but again given the caveats about the usefulness of the data gather and the research design as above.

5.2.3.2 Choice of the factors and measures used

Other constraints of the studies include that the within-child factors used were not effective in providing information for the study. The Locus of Control measure was not used widely enough and the teacher and social worker ratings of self-esteem and social skills were very subjective. More detailed information about the young people's coping styles, their determination and motivation to succeed and their self-efficacy would be interesting to follow-up in further work. Fonagy et al (1994) underline the importance of attachments and the reflective-self function for the adaptation of individuals, as alluded to in the Case Studies. Again, these factors were not addressed in any detailed way in this study although experiences of attachment, loss and bereavement would all be of primary interest for this group of young people. A far-more in-depth approach to individual young people and their lives would provide a more valuable picture.

The researcher is aware that within the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors put forward (Figure 3), some of the factors used are specific for young people in care (e.g., those identified by Jackson and Martin, 1998) and others are more generically equated with success for at risk populations, for example those identified by Osborn (1990) and Pilling (1990). Similarly, few of the factors have been studied in depth to elucidate the processes through which they exert their effect either as a stressor or as a buffer in young people's lives in previous or in the current research (see earlier). Finally, some of the factors are on a continuum, for example self-esteem, locus of control, social orientation, whereby the negative

end of the construct, (low self-esteem, negative social orientation, external locus of control) could be seen as risk factors and the more positive end of the construct (high self-esteem, positive social orientation, internal locus of control) could be seen as protective factors within this research. Use of both poles of any construct were avoided within the framework used although it is acknowledged that within this research either end could have been presented. Again, this is an oversimplistic approach as without further research, it is not definitely presented that low and high self-esteem have the opposite effects in terms of resilience, (i.e. that high self-esteem will always act as a protective factor for all young people).

Finally, some of the individual factors could have been inter-related in other ways, for example Quinton and Rutter (1988) found that lack of parental care was a direct risk variable for conduct disorder and hence behaviour difficulties, another of the risk factors put forward within this research. Therefore any finding about one of the factors could have been complicated and affected by the presence of the other factor. As 'Behaviour difficulties' was not really considered as a risk factor in the final analysis as it had had to be used to contribute to defining the two groups of young people, 'educationally successful' and 'educationally unsuccessful'; this was unlikely to have caused problems within this research.

5.2.3.3 The definition of resilience used and group formation

Resilience was defined in this research along narrow lines (educational achievement and adaptive behaviour in school) and this led to issues with the research questions. As highlighted above in earlier discussion, the use of behaviour and exclusion from school within the definition nullified, at least in part, some of the hypothesis testing. However, enough educational data was not held to separate the two issues.

The dichotomy of educationally successful and unsuccessful was not as clear as that used by Jackson and Martin (1998) whose groups either had attained 5 A-C GCSE grades or were in further education (the successful group) or had not (the unsuccessful group). Within this study, the achievement of average levels on the national curriculum was used alongside having a school place and not having been excluded from school. A young person with learning difficulties who was not attaining at nationally average levels would therefore automatically be placed

within the unsuccessful group despite achieving at a good levels and making progress for their individual skills and competencies. They could therefore present with all of the characteristics of a successful learner apart from their attainment levels, for example, in terms of participation within the school community, attendance, social competence, adaptive behaviour etc. The issue of educational success was not as simplistic as had been used within this research. With a larger sample this approach might hold more validity, but with a small sample, perhaps a more individual approach to the young people and their success would have been more reliable in terms of group formation.

Cognitive skills were not controlled for within this research. It may simply be that the young people who were successful in education would have scored more highly on cognitive assessments and this could have been the prime reason for the differences found between the two groups. Future work would be wise to address this issue.

5.2.4 The qualitative study (Study 2)

To compensate for both the sampling difficulty and the over-structured questionnaire design, a qualitative approach was also taken, whereby young people were interviewed about their experiences to try and elucidate some of the interactions and causal paths occurring for these young people in looking at their life trajectories. Rutter (1987) highlights the importance of looking at turning points and also (Rutter, 1990) for protective mechanisms and processes underling positive adaptation.

However, the approach taken in this interview study used semi-structured interviews based on the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors and the research questions put forward after the literature review. This approach was taken for pragmatic reasons, but also fitted in with the approaches taken and described by Silverman (1984). On reflection, this structure, although allowing access to quantitative information which could be used in Study 3 and giving structure to the interviews which may have helped in terms of accessing the young people's views, also constrained the interview in part to remaining within safe boundaries and not really exploring the interactions between factors present in the young people's lives. A more open approach would have involved greater

A more qualitative approach allows for the difficulty of accessing a large sample as a very rich picture can be gained from interviewing a relatively small number of young people and perhaps using a narrative case study approach (as illustrated in Appendix 3.5) alongside a thematic analysis. This approach also allows for a more detailed analysis of interactions occurring between factors and of possible turning points for young people. There are difficulties with generalising findings from this type of research, but given the heterogeneity of the lives of young people in care, slowly building up a picture of their experiences, case-by-case, identifying similar themes and turning points, might prove valuable to a wider sample. This approach complimented by a more quantitative content-analysis approach, looking for replication of findings across different samples would also support that building up of a picture which could be highly informative both for future research and for practice.

5.3 Implications for Future Research

The above pointers suggest that the current set of studies are a first attempt at trying to use a Risk and Resilience Framework to address the particular case of young people in care. This is a highly complex field of research and the researcher feels that although a great deal has been learned about the approach, about young people in care's experiences and about carrying out applied research with this particular group of young people, it will contribute only a very small step along the understanding of the experiences of children in care in terms of resilience. Rather it may contribute to knowledge about useful approaches to take to this area of research and of useful avenues to investigate further.

Luthar and Cicchetti (2000) link the research on resilience with the need for research which can guide planning for social policy and intervention, but with cautions which should be heeded in this study. Some of these overlap with the difficulties and concerns highlighted above by Luthar et al (2000), for example difficulties with defining resilience and avoiding the term resiliency because of the connotations for children being able to make a difference themselves alone. However, they highlight the usefulness of the approach for policy and decision making in terms of shifting research in at-risk groups from a deficit model of looking at what went wrong and maladjustment to looking at individuals' strengths, how these can be utilised, and at looking at positive adaptation despite adversity.

In particular they highlight the need for interventions and programmes to be put into place which take into account the scientific evidence and research rather than picking up resilience as an attractive concept or 'bandwagon'. They raise concern about the number of resilience programmes which are being used in schools and are seen as a quick-fix response to educating at risk children rather than having been put into place with due regard to the research carried out in the field.

Pianta and Walsh (1998) are quoted as highlighting a programme which tried to improve isolated social skills for children under the umbrella of 'fostering resiliency', without considering the context within which the children were living and attending school. They suggested that applications of resilience research have tended to be over-simplified and piecemeal, delivered by an external specialist. Pianta and Walsh (1998) argue for everyday services, anchored in theory and research, and using existing resources within existing communities. Finally, Pianta and Walsh (1998) argue for consideration to be given to how aspects of resilience intervention components are integrated into children's educational curriculum, environment and life context as well as their own personal attributes and approach to life.

In terms then of future research for young people in care using this approach, there are three areas around which research should be focused. Firstly, research into specific risk and protective factors and their interactions in young people's lives, secondly, research into what this means and what it tells us in terms of the processes occurring in the lives of children in care and then finally, looking for successful interventions based upon this research which can be put into place to help improve the educational achievement of young people in care and to improve their life chances.

It is important that risk and protective factors found for more general populations of socially disadvantaged children are specifically researched for young people in care because the interaction of these factors in their particular case where they are unlikely to be living with their birth family and are likely to have experienced loss, bereavements and disturbances in attachment, is likely to be specific to their context.

This thesis seems to suggest that young people do have similar yet diverse experiences and it is how they deal with these, how they rationalise them and move on which is important for their educational success. The young people all had key people who were important to them, supportive of their education, but some were able to make better use of these relationships than others. There was a trend for the young people who were successful to have more internal Loci of Control, fitting in with previous work in this area (e.g., Jackson & Martin, 1998). Without wanting to re-direct research back to the individual young people without a consideration of their social context, the research does seem to suggest that more in-depth work with individual young people about their individual circumstances, including attachments, self-efficacy beliefs, attributions about their experiences and coping strategies would be a particularly interesting and valuable area on which to focus. Following on from comments in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 about the conceptual design of the study and the research design, a qualitative study focusing on one or two protective factors with individual young people to try and elucidate the protective mechanisms occurring for them would appear to be a more worthwhile and theoretically sound basis for future work. This would be more likely to contribute to the understanding of protective mechanisms and how they are important for young people in care specifically.

Improvement suggestions have been made within each individual study in relation to repetition of the work carried out and reported in this thesis. However alternative approaches to work around resilience are considered which would focus on action research within teams already working within an authority. This would fit in with the suggestions of Pianta and Walsh (1998) for interventions to be anchored in the young people's everyday experiences and context.

Two approaches could be taken, either having a specialist researcher working within and alongside a team of social workers, but providing a different role to that provided within the normal team. The role would entail meeting with young people and analysing their experiences and beliefs about their experiences whilst providing therapeutic support. Alternatively, a second approach to this area of work might be to enskill and provide time to those already working directly with the young people, (i.e. the social workers, foster carers) with a consultant providing training, supervision and analysis of findings. Either of these roles could well be taken by an Educational Psychologist working as part of a social services team. A

researcher working from within the Authority and from within the structures set up to work with the young people might find the gaining of a sample and accessibility and communication to be much easier. However, there could then be issues of young people not wanting to engage with a worker who they saw as being within social care services, finding it more difficult to accept promises of confidentiality and anonymity.

Personally for the researcher, completion of the work reported in this thesis has lead to a desire for further knowledge and understanding of attachment issues and of how these relate to coherent life and attachment stories, to personality strengths and weaknesses, communication styles and to adaptive functioning. It seems that a possible key for unlocking the success of these young people is in understanding and being able to support them to be able to learn, cope, seek support and adapt to their own experiences. This is an area which the researcher will seek to develop further, in developing her own practice for children in care but also more widely with implications for other disadvantaged children.

5.4 Implications for Practice

In terms of generic practice, research in this area is at a very early stage given the caveats discussed by Luthar et al (2000) and Pianta and Walsh (1998) in terms of piecemeal approaches and hasty application without due regard to the research base. Although the research base in resilience generally is large, there is little with regard to the unique experiences and contexts of children in public care. However, certainly there are implications for whole school interventions based on good-practice, for useful assessment procedures for individual children and young people and for specific interventions for looked after children. These may not be drawn specifically from Studies 1, 2 and 3 within this research, but there are certainly issues of good practice which can be learned from the literature review and from the themes identified.

5.4.1 Organisational or systemic developments

The recent Government Green Paper, "Every Child Matters" (DfES, 2003) and more recently, the Children Bill (2004) represent the first steps in a long programme for change in children's services. The Children Bill (2004) provides

the legislative power for Government to ensure that more effective and accessible services are developed for children, young people and their families.

'Every Child Matters' (2003) although responding to specific enquiries around the deaths of individual children who failed to be protected within our society (for example, the Lord Laming Enquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié) aims to help every child to achieve his / her potential. It aims to address the needs of children at risk through improving the services provided for all children as well as those more specific to vulnerable children. The paper focuses on five broad key outcomes, those of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being. Risk factors for social exclusion for all children are considered as well as protective factors including, parental interest in education, the school environment and the influence of the peer group. Therefore, the construct of resilience for children is beginning to be reflected in this key piece of social policy for all children and young people in England. The paper looks at several areas which impact on these four outcomes for all children as well as focusing more specifically on vulnerable children including children in need of protection and children in care. Actions within these areas will briefly be reviewed and specific links with the research reported in this thesis will be addressed.

5.4.1.1 Actions to improve support for parents and carers

Improvements to supporting parents, carers and families is very much welcomed by the researcher. The importance of the time that the young people spend in their birth families, not only in terms of the number of risk factors which they are likely to experience but also given the attachments which young people form to those families, abusive or not. These factors suggest that time and resources invested in improving children's experiences within their families is very valuable. Indeed, if more children can be supported within their own families, there will be less children taken into care with the resulting difficulties which are then encountered.

The paper outlines plans to improve services provided to all parents and carers, (e.g., improving communication between schools and parents and carers, as highlighted in this research). There are also plans to improve services which are

targeted and offer specialist support, (e.g., offering family mediation, support to children with a parent in prison), as well as improving the implementation of compulsory actions such as Parenting Programmes and Parenting Orders to combat anti-social behaviour. It also builds on the Adoption and Children Act (2002) in increasing the adoption of Looked After Children and improving the recruitment and retention of foster carers. The paper discusses the Government's first objective for children's social services being to ensure that all children are securely attached to carer's capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of their childhood, a prerequisite for providing many of the protective factors highlighted in this research. A concern would be noted that with more children in care being adopted, this research would argue for time and consideration being given to how life story work and birth family contact are managed for children and young people who are adopted. Often this contact is restricted, perhaps to letterbox contact or to 'once-a-year' contact. The current study suggests that young people need to be given an opportunity to develop coherence about their own life and context and restrictions on contact and discussions about birth families, whilst perhaps being easier for adoptive families to deal with, may not be in the true best interests of the young person.

5.4.1.2 Actions to support early intervention and effective prevention

In line with the factors which contribute to the educational underachievement of young people in care, as highlighted in the literature review, the Green Paper and the Children Bill target the effectiveness of agencies to work together. The Children Bill outlines that Local Authorities now have a duty to make arrangements to promote co-operation between themselves, voluntary agencies and other partner agencies to promote the physical and mental health of children, as well as their protection, education and well-being.

Actions to support improved access to information and sharing of information between different services are outlined in both documents – both in terms of technical access through information sharing systems and in legislation in terms of being allowed to share information and concerns. A common assessment framework is suggested which would remove the need for children and their families to undergo a large number of assessments often by inappropriate professionals. A single lead professional would be nominated to monitor and

direct other services as required and to ensure consistency and continuity of support. Finally, professionals would be required to work in multi-disciplinary teams, based around extended schools working with the community and children's centres providing integrated early education, day care, health services and family and parenting support, from one centre in the most deprived areas.

5.4.1.3 Accountability and integration

The Green Paper outlines plans to bring services together both at a national and local level through Children's Trusts to ensure that everyone working with children is working towards the same shared aims. The Children Bill legislates for the need for a national Children's Commissioner who will promote and safeguard the rights and interests of children in England. Within each Local Authority there must also be a Director of Children's Services and a Lead Member for Children's Services to ensure that children's interests are upheld across the services.

Both papers introduce the aim of replacing Area Child Protection Committees with more powerful 'Local Safeguarding Children Boards' to co-ordinate partner agencies under the direction of the Director Of Children's Services. The new duty on Local Education Authorities, schools and Further Education Institutions to underpin and reinforce the priority given to safeguarding and protecting children came into force in April 2004.

5.4.1.4 The workforce

Finally, the Green Paper outlines plans to strengthen the work force of professionals who work with children. Social workers are targeted in this paper given the national vacancy rate of eleven per cent ('Every Child Matters', p. 85). Given the difficulties encountered in liaising with and gaining information from social workers encountered in the research reported in this thesis, the need for a rise in the number of social workers would be reinforced. In this study difficulties were encountered in gaining access to workers and in them responding given the pressures of meeting statutory deadlines and other commitments. Given the suggestion for research outlined in 6.4 above, (i.e. that the completion of research would be well-placed with practitioners already working with the young people) and with the Green Paper's suggestion for all young people to have a lead

professional (most likely the social worker for young people in care), workers will need an increased amount of time to truly succeed in this role for young people and hence more workers will be required.

From the point of view of educational psychology, psychologists are not mentioned in the list of professionals given in the green paper who are in key roles working with children, young people and families, yet educational psychologists and clinical psychologists are often amongst the most highly qualified and flexible professionals working within this field. Consideration may need to be given on the part of the profession as a whole as to where and how educational psychologists will fit into the new structures. A sidelining of educational psychologists into working solely with children with special needs would be a wasted opportunity. The actions outlined in the green paper could open up opportunities for specialists and for generic practitioners alike. These could include opportunities in the areas of early years, working specifically with the Children's Centres, working with families in the Children's Centres with parenting skills programmes and family mediation and home visiting programmes; working with the extended schools, both systemically and again with groups of parents, pupils and training teachers and other staff; working alongside social workers within child protection as well as in permanency planning for looked after children, in the planning for adoption and post-adoption support and working as consultants to the multi-disciplinary teams offering expertise in group formation and team working.

Educational psychologists have broad areas of expertise; of child development, the interaction of risk and protective factors for child development, families, schools and raising educational achievement for children with special needs as well as for all children and of systems and organisations. Educational psychologists are trained to work with systems, as consultants, as therapists (in some cases), in developing and offering training packages and in action research which could be valuable in supporting the evaluation of the actions put into place.

Educational psychologists are generally experienced in working within multi-disciplinary teams as even within the narrow remit of working with individual children within a mainstream school, most EPs will be liaising with other professionals within the teaching and health professions, bringing people together

to consult and plan with parents to support the progress of their child. EPs are well-placed in terms of liaison with other professionals to support and establish multi-agency working and to raise awareness about involving young people, about resilience and the importance of establishing protective factors for young people. EPs have close and direct links in many cases with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, with Paediatricians, school nurses, health visitors, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, school staff, both teaching, support staff and counsellors and with peripatetic teachers, as well as with Education Welfare Officers with social workers and with Advisors in Schools.

5.4.2 School-wide interventions

In considering school-wide interventions, looking at resilience opens up opportunities for raising awareness with school staff and bringing in discussions about factors which can act as risk and protective factors for many of the children whom they teach. Considering resilience specifically raises the importance of these factors and the influence which they can have and offers an opportunity to look at familiar areas but within a new framework and with a different and refreshing approach. School staff are used to looking for a young person's strengths, for what has gone well, but the construct of resilience gives them permission to consider this within a psychological framework which may then give the approach more power.

In terms of more specific foci for whole-school interventions as suggested by the research on resilience, peer group issues and bullying continue to be high on the agenda for many schools and young people. EPs may be well-placed to support in the understanding and management of these situations.

In a recent study (Oliver & Candappa, 2003) 51% of primary and 54% of secondary school pupils thought that bullying was a big problem in their school. The report highlights the need for schools to consult with young people about what might work in reducing bullying. Possibilities raised in the research included offering young people the chance to talk to an adult in confidence, for advice, support and problem-solving. This was alongside sustained anti-bullying initiatives and introducing more than one initiative at a time so that the problem was being combated through a variety of different approaches. Other issues raised included

the need for teachers to be trained in participative approaches to working with children and young people, for the importance of friendships in protecting children and in promoting their social and emotional competence, to be recognised. Work on anti-bullying policies, the school ethos, considering the environmental design of the school and involving parents were also seen to be valuable. The DfES produced an Anti-Bullying Pack for schools ("Bullying. Don't suffer in Silence, 2002) which outlines a number of possible interventions which schools could put into place. Many of these are highly familiar to educational psychologists who could offer schools valuable support in planning, implementing and evaluating these interventions. These include Circle Time and Circle of Friends, peer and adult mediation, active listening and counselling approaches, Quality Circles and assertiveness training. Work with parents and policy development is also included.

Bullying in schools is certainly more widespread than just being focused on young people in care. However, the particular isolation and lack of birth family support for many of these young people may make them particularly sensitive to feelings of stigmatisation and may make the situation more difficult for them to deal with.

5.4.3 Family work

Research on resilience highlights the need for work with parents and carers, for a need to support parents in improving their parenting skills and particularly for working with those parents who may be most difficult to access. Parents who may be prone to substance abuse, who have difficulty putting their own needs above those of their children and then may not see the need for support and parents with mental health problems, although difficult to access may be most in need of someone to talk to and to other services. More support for parents may decrease the need for children to be taken into care. Specifically the resilience research highlights the importance of parents being aware of their parenting style, of laying down firm boundaries for their children, monitoring and enforcing non-punitive methods of discipline alongside being warm and responsive to their children. This is linked closely with supporting their children in developing secure attachments to enhance their future life opportunities. The importance of encouraging parents to be and to show their interest in their children's education, whether they are living with them at home or not and being able to give the children support with their

education, even if this support is physical (somewhere quiet to do homework) or emotional is also highlighted.

Work with foster carers around the risk and protective factors discussed and around education would be likely to improve the quality of foster care provided. Schofield (2003) highlighted that “involvement of an educational psychologist” was seen as a “protective factor” in research around the significance of education in promoting stability in foster care. Other factors which were identified included the provision of appropriate placements and the meeting of children’s needs without stigmatisation.

Life Story Work and helping young people develop a sense of coherence about their lives could offer a valuable way of supporting young people in care in moving forward. Contact with birth families was also identified by the researcher as a theme which the young people interviewed felt very strongly about. More work is required in exploring how these two issues are reinforced for young people so that we are offering them the best support possible in coming to terms with what has happened to them in their lives.

5.4.4 Individual assessments

Educational psychologist’s assessments which focus on a traditional approach of cognitive and standardised testing may miss rich sources of information which may, actually, be far more important in making a difference for a young person in care. Many of the factors looked at in this research could be put into a simple assessment questionnaire which could be completed with young people. The Personal Education Plans in the researcher’s authority were based, in part, on the protective factors discussed in this literature review and hence somewhere to do homework, someone interested in education, access to a computer are all issues covered within the young person’s Personal Education Plan within the Authority. Similarly many of the risk factors were highlighted in the initial training implemented in the Authority after the Guidance for the Education of Young People in Public Care (2000) was published so that social workers, teachers, elected members, education welfare officers, educational psychologists and learning support assistants alike are aware of the importance of, for example, maintaining stability in placements.

'Every Child Matters' discussed the introduction of a common Assessment Framework based on the 'Assessment Framework of Children in Need and their Families' on the SEN Code of Practice (2001) and on other assessment instruments. It may be that educational psychologists will need to consider the approaches and assessment tools currently used within the profession to fit in with a future agreed assessment framework. Whether the risk and protective factors will be included within this framework is not known. It would appear to be a sensible approach to include these, especially as many of the factors, particularly the provision of external resources, could be quite easily put into place for many of the young people. However, without more research on the importance and effectiveness of these factors and on the issues of the individualisation of the interaction of factors for different young people, this may be a step too far.

5.4.5 Interventions for individual young people

As an educational psychologist involved with a particular young person, reflection around the risk and protective factors and the use of the framework as a template may provide a valuable tool against which to gather information about the young person and their life which can sit alongside more traditional types of assessment information. It can also then suggest ideas for interventions, (e.g., EPs working with schools and social workers to raise awareness about good practice, an example being around the sensitivity of the curriculum, promoting contact between school and the care placements as well as between school and the birth family, where appropriate).

In considering the current sample of young people, only three were known to the Educational Psychology Service, two having statements of SEN and one having been excluded from first school. Despite moves for improving joint working and restructuring to bring services closer together, three of these young women had exhibited behaviour which put them 'beyond parental control' and showed patterns of disaffection from school – truanting, being excluded and underachieving. Another had experienced abuse, rape, teenage pregnancy and attempted suicide. At least two of the young women showed visible signs of having self-harmed and yet none of the above had been known by name to the Educational Psychology Service. They had not been discussed with the school's link educational psychologist either by staff from the school or by their social worker. If

psychologists are not involved it would seem that a source of expertise and advice is not being brought to bear for these young people. Using the risk and resilience framework to explore these young women's life experiences with them may have offered a valuable means of pulling together their life experiences and considering what their real needs might be and of putting these into place. Rees and Bailey (2003) highlight the growing emphasis on the recognition and value of student perceptions and that listening to a young person's perspective can "reveal a hidden solution in the therapeutic context" (p.45). If, as discussed, the research points to the need to support young people in developing a coherent view of their lives and experiences, then psychologists may well be the best placed practitioners, in light of their experience and training, to support them in doing this.

5.5 "Resilience"

At the end of this piece of research around resilience and young people in care, it was felt that it would be valuable to reflect the researcher's current thinking around the concept of resilience. This remains for the researcher a complex area, but it may be useful to highlight key points which have become more salient as a result of the work undertaken.

5.5.1 "Resilience as a state"

That resilience for the researcher is a descriptor – it reflects a 'current state' for an individual who has experienced significant adversity and yet manifests competence – who is attaining, is emotionally and socially competent, is reasonably robust and is able to function well in everyday life. For the researcher it cannot be more than this, in that, from the review of the literature and from the work with young people, someone can 'appear' resilient one day and then something can happen, their world can change and then the picture could, at least temporarily, be very different. For the researcher it is a descriptor of state, of how someone is (given their early adverse experiences), rather than describing in any way the factors that lead the young people to having achieved that 'state', for example through developing good coping skills, having an internal locus of control, self-efficacy beliefs, or through attributing positively.

5.5.2 *"Attaining resilience"*

Attaining resilience is in the researcher's understanding, a result of a life-path or trajectory. The researcher believes that individuals are born into the world with a particular genetic 'package' of perhaps skills, abilities and personality traits, as well as physical attributes. The world then impacts on the child as it impacts on the world, initially primarily through its primary care-giver(s), the parents. The particular close environments, the relationships and attributes of those care-givers will interact with the 'biological givens' and as the young person matures, they will experience, develop and learn emotions, behaviours, styles and skills which will enable them to function or not in the world around them. Children constantly adapt and change as they experience, reflect and learn about the world which they encounter. Whether an individual who experiences significant adversity can then go on to succeed and be described as exhibiting resilience will depend on their prior experiences, their thoughts and feelings about those prior experiences and on their skills and abilities. This is why knowledge of young people's life experiences and their views about what has happened to them appear to be so key.

5.5.3 *"Resilience as a bandwagon"*

For the researcher, resilience as a descriptor remains a useful and powerful positive construct to be used to bring awareness, understanding and possibilities for change to the lives of disadvantaged children and young people. It moves us away from the 'hopeless case' scenario. However, there is some concern that it can be used or dismissed as the latest 'bandwagon' – a fashionable term used without due understanding or knowledge of the research base and the complexities behind it. Interventions can be labelled as enhancing resilience without having due regard to what this actually means and whether they are likely to have any impact in the way that is claimed. It should also be recognised that resilience is obviously also a word in everyday usage apart from its description of a psychological construct. Care should be taken such that when resilience is used to describe the psychological construct, it should be done so with due regard to the research and to the complexity of the field.

5.6 Concluding Comments

This thesis does suggest that there have been improvements in systems to support young people in care since the literature review and since the initial research design was put together. The young people have improved their educational attainments as a group and serious consideration has been given around issues of corporate parenting and parental responsibility. However, there are still some young people who are falling through the gaps.

As a piece of resilience research, these studies do not necessarily take us a great deal further, but they do draw on the experiences of young people to pull out themes and areas where multi-agency support could be focused. These include support for single parent families, consideration of improving birth family contact and young people's understanding of issues related to their relationships with their birth family, a continued focus on continuity of school and care placements as well as continuity of support from other key staff, for example social workers. Peer group issues and bullying within schools would also be a specific area to focus on for young people in care as well as issues for the young people about their own identity and coping strategies.

As educational psychologists, there could be a role in raising awareness and promoting this more positive type of approach to the young people and to their experiences, particularly focusing on their strengths and coping capacities and ensuring that schools have an understanding of these.

Finally, the research has highlighted the difficulty of working with young people in care, primarily due to the need to access the young people themselves through adults, particularly social workers who are generally under-resourced and over-pressurised in delivering their normal workload yet alone participating in research. Access through foster carers and residential homes may prove easier, with consent then being sought from social workers.

Consideration needs to be given in research to focussing on the individual young people and to gaining an understanding of their life stories, to risk and protective factors present in their lives and to turning points. Perhaps, once these vulnerable young people are supported in gaining what most people already own, a clear and

coherent view of their own life story, then they will be able to move on, to focus on their own future and to achieve in school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

MATERIAL RELATED TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Appendix 1.1 Overview of the thesis

Overview of the Thesis

Study 1 – the pilot questionnaire study

This study involved designing the parallel questionnaires to be completed by social workers and teachers about individual young people in care. The questions asked for information about the presence of identified risk and protective factors in the young peoples' lives as put forward in the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors (see Figure 2). The semi-structured interview proforma was developed based on the same framework. The study involved piloting the questionnaires and it was also intended to pilot the semi-structured interview proforma. However, because of difficulties gaining a sample of young people in care, piloting of the interview proforma was not possible.

The study resulted in changes to the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors (Figure 2, developed into Figure 3) and in minor changes to the questionnaire design. Because of the difficulties gaining an adequate sample of young people in care, a different procedure was put forward for obtaining a sample for the main questionnaire study (Study 3).

Study 2 – the qualitative interview study

In this study, a sample of young people was accessed through the Children's Rights Officer in the Local Authority who had been working with them within a drama group. These young people completed the semi-structured interviews developed as part of Study 1, with the researcher. A measure of Locus-of-Control was completed by the young people. Some of the young people gave permission for the questionnaires developed in Study 1 to be completed about them and this data then contributed to Study 3.

As discussed in 1.6.2.2, it was recognised that the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors (Figure 2) and the questionnaire approach were over-simplistic in studying the complex situation within which young people in care find themselves and in looking at resilience for this group of young people. The interview study was intended therefore to contribute richer information to the research, laying value on the young people's beliefs and perceptions about their experiences. This study lead to the identification of themes which were considered alongside the quantitative data collected in Studies 1 and 3.

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Study 3 – ‘addressing the research questions’

The questionnaires as developed in Study 1 were used with social workers and teachers about a sample of young people, together with the Rutter Behaviour Rating Scales, but a different sampling procedure was used. Again problems occurred in the gaining of that sample.

The questionnaire data was put together from the social workers and teachers about the participants recruited in Study 1, about those recruited through Study 2 (the interview study) and about new participants recruited in Study 3. In addition, a content analysis of the interview transcripts from Study 2 was carried out and the presence of risk and protective factors recorded in those interviews was added to the questionnaire data. This final sample was analysed statistically.

Conclusions

Conclusions are pulled together from the three studies to address the initial research questions and specific hypotheses put forward within each study. These are discussed before the constraints of the research and implications for future research and for practice are explored.

A case study approach was also used to look at the lives of two of the young people who participated in the interview study and the risk and resilience approach is used to consider their experiences. However, these could not be included within the main body of the thesis but are included as Appendix 3.5 as they are related to the discussion about study 2 and implications for future work.

APPENDIX TWO
MATERIAL RELATED TO STUDY ONE

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Appendix 2.1 | Origin and Development of the Questionnaires in Study 1 |
| Appendix 2.2 | Introduction to Questionnaire A |
| Appendix 2.3 | Questionnaire A |
| Appendix 2.4 | Introduction to Questionnaire B |
| Appendix 2.5 | Questionnaire B |
| Appendix 2.6 | Covering letter sent to social workers |
| Appendix 2.7 | Covering letter sent to designated teachers |
| Appendix 2.8 | Risk and Protective Factors Scoring Table |
| Appendix 2.9 | Table A: Return of the questionnaire A's and consent forms in <u>Study 1</u> |
| Appendix 2.10 | Table B: Protective and risk factors present for the participants |
| Appendix 2.11 | Tables C - E – Information gathered by questionnaires not used within analysis of the Framework of Risk and Protective Factors |
| | Table C Background Information |
| | Table D Friendships and Support within the Care Placement |
| | Table E Educational Factors |

APPENDIX 2.1

Origin and Development of the Questionnaires in Study 1

Planning

It was decided to use questionnaires to collect information about the young people as discussed in 1.7.2.1. Cohen, Manion and Morison (2000, chapter 14, pp. 245 – 265) and college tutors provided advice on their design and implementation.

As specific information was required about the young people, questionnaires needed to be designed for the study to cover at least some of the risk and protective factors in the framework put forward at the end of the literature review (see Figure 2). Given that information about the same young people was to be collected from two sources (social workers and designated teachers), it was decided to design parallel forms of the same questionnaire to ease analysis. Consideration was given as to how best to gain information about each of the risk and protective factors such that the answers gained could fairly easily be analysed into yes or no for each of the risk and protective factors.

It was decided to try and include as many as possible of the factors within this one questionnaire as it was felt that this would increase the chance of the questionnaires being completed. The researcher was concerned that if a social worker received three questionnaires to complete about a young person, for example the overall questionnaire and then two in addition, about for example self-esteem and social skills, they would be more likely to put them aside than if there was just one questionnaire to complete.

Design

Because the questionnaires were required to yield basic yes or no answers to whether risk or protective factors were present or not, mainly closed questions and rating scales were used. However, the researcher did include some flexibility so that more detail could be collected in relevant areas, for example about details of placements.

Closed questions were used to elicit background information, including from the teachers information about the young people's educational attainment so that the

young people would be able to be assigned to one of the two groups. They were also used to find about the young people's plans and aspirations, birth family contact and support for education in the school environment (the miscellaneous questions).

Likert-type scales were used to collect information about the young people's self-esteem, their social skills and about the importance of risk factors (in the social workers' opinions) within the young people's birth families. They were used as it was felt that they would provide a greater degree of sensitivity in the answers given in these areas, for example a social worker could give a rating of a young person's self-esteem rather than just saying it was high or not. An 8 point scale was chosen as it avoids the midpoint and difficulties with respondents tending to opt for the middle option, whilst providing a level of differentiation felt to be appropriate to the sensitivity and reflective nature of the questions being asked. Four descriptors were given on each scale, symmetrically placed in columns 1, 3, 6 and 8. It was felt that this would give respondents enough of a guide as to the meaning of the scale without being too descriptive and cumbersome for respondents. The respondents were given the opportunity to add comments as well as completing each of the rating scales.

The order of the questions was chosen starting with the factual background information which it was felt would be easy to complete, then covering the more 'intimate' and reflective questions about the young people themselves, and then to finish off with the briefer, more closed miscellaneous questions.

The questionnaires were drafted, care being taken that they were clearly worded and laid out and they were shared with college tutors for proof-reading and checking. Amendments were made and the questionnaires were then piloted through study 1.

APPENDIX 2.2 Introduction to Questionnaire A

Section 1 : Background Information

Questions 1-5 asked the respondent for details of the participant's date of birth, gender, ethnicity, age they were first taken into care and the reason for them currently being in care.

Question 6 asked the social worker for details of the care placements which the participant had lived in with dates and reasons for moves.

Section 2 : Self-esteem

Question 7 asked the social worker to rate the participants self-esteem on a Likert-type rating scale of 1 to 8. One was described as "very low. The child/young person has a poor image of themselves and sees themselves as useless at everything. They may think that they are stupid, ugly, no-one cares for them and they may even self-harm. They may avoid tasks, or become involved in relationships because they are so sure that they will fail or 'mess things up'". Eight was described as "very high. The young person generally likes themselves and has the self-confidence to tackle all activities, realising that they won't be the best at everything and that that is OK. They understand that we are all better and worse at different things and that that is also OK".

Section 3 : Risk and Protective Factors

Question 8 asked the social worker to rate the presence of factors within the participants birth home environment on a Likert-type rating scale of 1 to 8 where 1 was described as "not at all relevant" and 8 as described as "a crucial issue". The following factors were covered; lack of parental education, lack of parental interest in education, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, parental mental illness, parental divorce, family illness, bereavement, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and 'other'.

Section 4 : Social Relationships

Question 9 asked the respondent to give details of the participants contact with their birth family specifying with whom and how often they were in contact.

Question 10 asked the respondent whether the participant experiences a close relationship with an adult other than their parent. Suggestions were given including, grandparents, aunt, uncle, foster carer, social worker, key worker (residential), teacher and neighbour.

Question 11 asked the respondent whether the participant had lacked parental care in their pre-care experiences and whether another adult had fulfilled that role.

Question 12 asked the respondent how well the participant gets on with other children / young people on a Likert-type rating scale of 1 to 8. One was described as “not at all well. There are lots of problems and I am very concerned” and eight was described as “very well, he/she has lots of real friends, they go out of their way for each other, play well together and I am not at all concerned about this area”.

Question 13 asked the respondent whether the participant had friends who were not in care who were successful in education.

Section 5 : Miscellaneous Questions

Question 14 asked the respondent about the participant’s hopes and plans for the future, including for that summer, the next school year, after school and in the future.

Question 15 asked the respondent whether the participant had somewhere quiet to do their homework and whether they had a regular time slot for homework.

Question 16 asked the respondent whether the participant had access to educational resources outside school including books, a computer, and a library ticket.

Question 17 asked the respondent who attended parents evenings, sports days and school plays for the participant.

Question 18 asked the respondent whether there was anyone who was particularly supportive of the young person’s education.

Question 19 asked the respondent whether the participant had a school place or alternative educational provision.

Question 20 asked the respondent whether the participant had a Personal Education Plan.

Question 21 asked the respondent whether the participant had been excluded from school asking for details about the dates and the reasons.

Question 22 asked the respondent to write down the participant’s school history in terms of previous schools attended.



Young People in Public Care – Research Questions for Social Workers

This study is looking for factors which enhance the resilience of children in care and hence contribute to improved educational attainment, which as we know, is a key success factor for adult life. The research is looking at their experience of education, support for their education and also factors such as their pre-care experiences. This questionnaire is one of the vehicles for gathering this information and will sit alongside questionnaires from their designated teachers in schools and also from my working directly with the young people themselves.

Please complete all of the questionnaire with as much detail and accuracy as possible. There may be some questions which are difficult to answer, for example if the child / young person does not have a school place. Some of the questions may also seem more relevant for older or perhaps younger children. However, I would be grateful if you could attempt to answer them all as accurately as possible. I hope that much of the information will be readily available to you, for example in the child's Personal Education Plan and in their LAC documentation and that you will find the structure of the questionnaire quite easy to fill in.

Many, many thanks for your contribution. Please do not hesitate to contact me on..... if you have any queries or concerns or if you have any useful suggestions for improving the questionnaire, particularly in relation to the ease of filling it in!

Susan Birch

Please complete - for admin use only:

Name of social worker:

Name of carer / key residential worker:

Address of current placement:

Tel. No. at current placement:

Background Information

1. **Date of Birth:**
2. **Gender:**
3. **Ethnicity:**
4. **Age first taken into care:**
5. **Reason for currently being in care:**

a) Care order: ICO / FCO Reason:
[please delete]

b) Accommodated: Requested by whom:
Reason:

6. Placement history:

| | Dates | Type of placement (foster care, home, residential home, home , relatives) | Reason for move |
|----|-------|---|-----------------|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |

Self-esteem

7. How would you rate the child / young person’s global self esteem, where their self-esteem is a measure of how closely their image of themselves matches their ‘ideal self’. Do they feel good about themselves or not?

1 is very low, the child / young person has a poor image of themselves and sees themselves as useless at everything. They may think that they are stupid, ugly, no-one cares for them and they may even self-harm. They may avoid tasks or becoming involved in relationships because they are so sure that they will fail or ‘mess things up’.

3 is quite low. The child / young person may not think that they measure up to who they or someone else may like them to be, but they recognise that they are OK at some things.

6 is quite high, the child / young person feels quite good about themselves, perhaps in some areas rather than all and they feel that they can have a go at most things although they are not as good as....

8 is very high. The young person generally likes themselves and has the self-confidence to tackle all activities, realising that they won't be the best at everything and that that is OK. They understand that we are all better and worse at different things and that that is also OK.

PLEASE TICK

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|----------------|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| 1 Very low | 2 | 3 quite low | 4 | 5 | 6 quite high | 7 | 8 Very high |
| | | | | | | | |

Comments:

Risk factors and protective factors:

8. Please rate the presence of the following in the child / young person's birth home environment as far as is possible:

1 is not at all relevant

3 is 'may have had some relevance'

6 is very relevant

8 is 'a crucial issue in the family'

[Please tick]

| Factor | 1 not relevant | 2 | 3 some relevance | 4 | 5 | 6 very relevant | 7 | 8 crucial issue |
|---|----------------------|---|------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Lack of parental education (e.g. didn't complete school, no qualifications) | | | | | | | | |
| Lack of parental interest in education | | | | | | | | |
| Alcohol abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Drug abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Parental mental illness | | | | | | | | |
| Parental divorce | | | | | | | | |
| Family illness | | | | | | | | |
| Bereavement | | | | | | | | |
| Sexual abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Physical abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Emotional abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | | | | |

Comments:

Social relationships:

9. Is the child / young person still in contact with their birth family? If so which members and how regularly? [Please tick and give details]

- ☐ Mother.....
- ☐ Father.....
- ☐ Grandparents.....
.....
.....
- ☐ Siblings.....
.....
.....
.....
- ☐ Other.....
.....

10. Does the child / young person experience a close relationship with an adult other than their parent? [Please circle any applicable]

Grandparent / Aunt / Uncle / Foster carer / social worker /
key worker(residential)/ Teacher / Neighbour / Other

11. If the child / young person lacked parental care in their pre-care experiences – was this close relationship present then?

If so, who was that adult?

Social relationships:

9. Is the child / young person still in contact with their birth family? If so which members and how regularly? [Please tick and give details]

- ☐ Mother.....
- ☐ Father.....
- ☐ Grandparents.....
.....
.....
- ☐ Siblings.....
.....
.....
.....
- ☐ Other.....
.....

10. Does the child / young person experience a close relationship with an adult other than their parent? [Please circle any applicable]

Grandparent / Aunt / Uncle / Foster carer / social worker /
key worker(residential)/ Teacher / Neighbour / Other

11. If the child / young person lacked parental care in their pre-care experiences – was this close relationship present then?

If so, who was that adult?

12. How well does the child / young person get on with other children / young people ?

1 is – “not at all well, there are lots of problems. I am very concerned”

3 is – “not great, he/she doesn't seem to have many friends and there are some problems. I'm a bit concerned”

6 is – “quite well, he/she has quite a few friends and they seem to get on OK. I'm not particularly concerned”

8 is- “very well, he/she has lots of real friends, they go out of their way for each other/ play well together and I am not at all concerned about this area”

[please tick]

| | 1 not at all well | 2 | 3 some problems | 4 | 5 | 6 quite well | 7 | 8 very well |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| At school | | | | | | | | |
| In out-of-school activities | | | | | | | | |
| In their care placement | | | | | | | | |

Comments:

13. Does the child / young person have friends outside the care system who are successful in school?

Miscellaneous Questions:

14. What plans and hopes does the young person have for the future?

This summer?

Next school year?

When they leave school?

In the future?

15. Homework

a) Does the child / young person have somewhere quiet to do their homework?

b) Do they have a regular slot to complete homework?

If so, how long do they have?

16. Does the child / young person have access to resources outside school, to:

a) To books?

b) To a computer?

c) Do they have a library ticket?

d) Other (please give details)?

17. Who goes to:

a) Parents' evenings?

b) Sports days?

c) School plays / musical activities?

18. Is there anyone who is particularly supportive of this child / young person's education?

19. Does the child / young person have a school place? Yes / No

If not, do they have alternative educational provision – please specify

20. Does the child / young person have a Personal Education Plan?

21. Has the child / young person been excluded from school?

| | School Year / dates | No. days | Reason excluded | School |
|------------|------------------------|----------|-----------------|--------|
| Fixed Term | | | | |
| Permanent | | | | |

22. What is the child / young person's previous school history?

Please include any pre-school experience, if known.

| School | Dates |
|--------|-------|
| | |

MANY THANKS

APPENDIX 2.4 Introduction to Questionnaire B

Section 1 : Background Information

Questions 1-4 asked the respondent for details of the participant's date of birth, gender, ethnicity and school year.

Question 5 asked the respondent to fill in a table giving details of the participants National Curriculum levels, both tested and teacher assessed throughout their school career. Details of any other assessments completed were asked for, (e.g., reading scores or spelling scores). Other attainments were also highlighted, including positions of responsibility, sport, music, art, dance and other.

Section 2 : Special Support

Question 7 asked the respondent to say whether the participant had a statement of Special Educational Need, an Individual Education Plan, a Pastoral Support Programme or a Personal Education Plan. The respondent was then asked to complete a table saying whether the following other professionals had been involved in supporting the pupil; an Educational Psychologist, a Learning Support Teacher, a Behaviour Support Teacher, a Pupil Referral Unit, a member of the Education of Children in Public Care Support Team, a Learning Support Assistant in class, a mentor, a youth worker or any other.

Section 3 : Self-esteem

Question 8 asked the social worker to rate the participants self esteem on a Likert-type rating scale of 1 to 8. One was described as "very low. The child/young person has a poor image of themselves and sees themselves as useless at everything. They may think that they are stupid, ugly, no-one cares for them and they may even self-harm. They may avoid tasks, or become involved in relationships because they are so sure that they will fail or 'mess things up'". Eight was described as "very high. The young person generally likes themselves and has the self-confidence to tackle all activities, realising that they won't be the best at everything and that that is OK. They understand that we are all better and worse at different things and that that is also OK".

Section 4 : Social Relationships

Question 9 asked the respondent how well the participant gets on with other young people on a Likert-type rating scale of 1 to 8. One is described as "not at all well. There are lots of problems and I am very concerned" and eight was described as "very well,

he/she has lots of real friends, they go out of their way for each other, play well together and I am not at all concerned about this area”.

Question 10 asked the respondent whether the participant had friends outside the care system who were successful in school.

Section 5 : Miscellaneous Questions

Question 11 asked the respondent about the participant's hopes and plans for the future, including for that summer, the next school year, after school and in the future.

Question 12 asked the respondent whether the participant had somewhere quiet to do their homework and whether they had a regular time slot for homework.

Question 13 asked the respondent whether the participant had access to educational resources outside school including books, a computer, and a library ticket.

Question 14 asked the respondent who attended parents evenings, sports days and school plays for the participant.

Question 15 asked the respondent whether there was anyone who was particularly supportive of the young person's education.

Question 16 asked the respondent whether the participant had been excluded from school asking for details about the dates and the reasons.

Question 17 asked the respondent to write down the participant's school history in terms of previous schools attended.



**Young People in Public Care –
Research Questions for Designated Teachers**

This study is looking for factors which enhance the resilience of children in care and hence contribute to improved educational attainment, which as we know, is a key success factor for adult life. The research is looking at their experience of education, support for their education and also factors such as their pre-care experiences. This questionnaire is one of the vehicles for gathering this information and will sit alongside questionnaires from their social workers and also from my working directly with the young people themselves.

Please complete all of the questionnaire with as much detail and accuracy as possible. Some of the questions may also seem more relevant for older or perhaps younger children. However, I would be grateful if you could attempt to answer them all as accurately as possible. Please feel free to involve the child or young person's classteacher / form tutor in completion of the questionnaire. I hope that much of the information will be readily available to you, for example in the child's Personal Education Plan and in their school records and that you will find the structure of the questionnaire quite easy to fill out.

Many, many thanks for your contribution. Please do not hesitate to contact me on..... if you have any queries or concerns or if you have any useful suggestions for improving the questionnaire, particularly in relation to the ease of filling it in!

Susan Birch

For Admin use only, please complete:

School:

Name of designated teacher:

Name of classteacher / form tutor:

**Anyone else involved in completion
of the questionnaire, e.g. head of year (secondary):**

Background Information

1. **Date of Birth:**
2. **Gender:**
3. **Ethnicity:**
4. **School Year:**
5. **Educational Attainments:**

Please complete the following as fully and accurately as possible, appropriate to the age of the child. If the child is in year 10, please complete test results for all previous key stages:

| | | National Test results (SATs) | Optional test results | Teacher assessed levels (where relevant, e.g. if child missed test) |
|----|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 6a | KS1 Maths | | | |
| 6b | KS1 English | | | |
| 6c | KS1 Science | | | |
| 6d | KS2 Maths | | | |
| 6e | KS2 English | | | |
| 6f | KS2 Science | | | |
| 6g | KS3 maths | | | |
| 6h | KS3 English | | | |
| 6i | KS3 Science | | | |

6(j) Reading ages – please complete as available

| Date or chronological age | Test used | Standardised score (if available) | Reading Age |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

6(k) Spelling ages – please complete as available

| Date or chronological age | Test used | Standardised score (if available) | Reading Age |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

6(l) Other assessment results used in school:

6 (m) Other attainments in school:

Please note any other achievements gained by the child / young person in school. If none, please write this in. If there has been a significant change over the last year, please note this.

| | Achievements |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Positions of responsibility | |
| sport | |
| music | |
| art | |
| dance | |
| Other | |

7. Special Support:

a) Does the pupil have

- ☐ Statement of Special Educational Needs
- ☐ Individual Education plan
- ☐ Pastoral Support Programme
- ☐ Personal Education Plan

b) Has the pupil received support from the following:

[Please tick and complete dates where relevant]

| | This year | Previously (with dates) |
|--|-----------|-------------------------|
| Educational Psychologist | | |
| Learning Support Teacher | | |
| Teacher from Behaviour Support Team or outreach from Pupil Referral Unit | | |
| Place at Pupil Referral Unit | | |
| Member of Education of Children in Public care Team | | |
| Learning Support Assistant in class | | |
| Mentor | | |
| Youth Worker | | |
| Other | | |

Self-esteem

8. How would you rate the child / young person's global self esteem, where their self-esteem is a measure of how closely their image of themselves matches their 'ideal self'. Do they feel good about themselves or not?

1 is very low, the child / young person has a poor image of themselves and sees themselves as useless at everything. They may think that they are stupid, ugly, no-one cares for them and they may even self-harm. They may avoid tasks or becoming involved in relationships because they are so sure that they will fail or 'mess things up'.

3 is quite low. The child / young person may not think that they measure up to who they or someone else may like them to be, but they recognise that they are OK at some things.

6 is quite high, the child / young person feels quite good about themselves, perhaps in some areas rather than all and they feel that they can have a go at most things although they are not as good as....

8 is very high. The young person generally likes themselves and has the self-confidence to tackle all activities, realising that they won't be the best at everything and that that is OK. They understand that we are all better and worse at different things and that that is also OK.

PLEASE TICK

| 1 Very low | 2 | 3 quite low | 4 | 5 | 6 quite high | 7 | 8 Very high |
|---------------|---|----------------|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| | | | | | | | |

Comments:

Social relationships:

9. How well does the child / young person get on with other children / young people ?

1 is – “not at all well, there are lots of problems. I am very concerned”

3 is – “not great, he/she doesn't seem to have many friends and there are some problems. I'm a bit concerned”

6 is – “quite well, he/she has quite a few friends and they seem to get on OK. I'm not particularly concerned”

8 is- “very well, he/she has lots of real friends, they go out of their way for each other/ play well together and I am not at all concerned about this area”

[please tick]

| | 1 not at all well | 2 | 3 some problems | 4 | 5 | 6 quite well | 7 | 8 very well |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| At school | | | | | | | | |
| In out-of-school activities | | | | | | | | |
| In their care placement | | | | | | | | |

Comments:

10. Does the child / young person have friends outside the care system who are successful in school?

Miscellaneous Questions:

11. What plans and hopes does the young person have for the future?

This summer?

Next school year?

When they leave school?

In the future?

12. Homework

b) Does the child / young person have somewhere quiet to do their homework?

b) Do they have a regular slot to complete homework?

If so, how long do they have?

13. Does the child / young person have access to resources outside school, to:

a) To books?

b) To a computer?

c) Do they have a library ticket?

d) Other (please give details)?

14. Who comes to:

a) parent's evenings?

- b) Sports days?
- c) School plays / musical activities?

15. Is there anyone who is particularly supportive of this child / young person's education?

16. Has the child / young person been excluded from school?

| | School Year / dates | No. days | Reason excluded | School |
|------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|--------|
| Fixed Term | | | | |
| Permanent | | | | |

17. What is the child / young person's previous school history?

Please include any pre-school experience, if known.

| School | Dates |
|--------|-------|
| | |

MANY THANKS

APPENDIX 2.6

Dear <NAME OF SOCIAL WORKER>

Re

I am currently undertaking a Doctorate in Educational Psychology at University College London. As part of this work I am carrying out a piece of research investigating the key factors in improving the educational attainment of children in public care.

As part of the Education of Children in Public Care Team, I have discussed and gained support for the work from X (Assistant Director, Social Services, Children and Families) and from Y (Head of Learning Support). I hope very much that this piece of research will help in targeting support for children and young people in care in... .. but more widely to all children and young people in care nationally, through contributing to our knowledge in this area.

The study is looking for factors which enhance the resilience of children in care and hence contribute to improved educational attainment, which as we know, is a key success factor for adult life. I have chosen to work with 3 groups of young people, from year 4, year 7 and year 10, looking at their experience of education, support for their education and also factors such as their pre-care experiences. I will be gathering this information through questionnaires, from their social workers and designated teachers in schools.

I am starting the work with a pilot study and I have chosen to work with the group of year 10 pupils as well as one pupil from each of the other age groups for this. I have chosen the young people from these age groups randomly. I would be very grateful if you would therefore consider whether it would be appropriate for X to be involved in this work.

Parental consent

I have discussed with X and with tutors at college and have decided that for children who are the participant of care orders to Social Services, I will look to yourselves as Social Workers for parental consent, although I would ask you to discuss this with carers and also with birth parents if they are actively involved and supportive of the young people's education.

For children who are accommodated, I would ask that you contact the parents of the young people and seek their consent. Please feel free to send them a copy of this letter. If you foresee any problems with this, please contact me as soon as possible to consider solutions.

Consent from the young people

We have also reviewed this and the young person will of course have the opportunity to opt out of the work at any stage if they feel very uncomfortable. I would be grateful if you could tell them a little about the work so that if anyone mentions it to them, they will know a little about what it is about.

The work will extend over three years. I will provide the young people involved with general feedback from the work although this may not be directly and it will not be for some time. **It is important that the young people understand that information gathered is used anonymously as part of a group and that information about**

individual young people will not be presented in any way that individuals can be identified.

I would therefore be very grateful if you would consider the involvement of X in the research and will give consent / seek consent and return the enclosed form **as soon as possible**. I have enclosed the relevant questionnaire for completion by yourselves (again in partnership with foster carers, residential workers or birth family where appropriate) and would be grateful if this could also be returned before **Friday 20th July 2001**. Once I have received consent, I will also be sending a parallel questionnaire to schools (please see enclosed – for information only) and will contact the foster carer to arrange a time to visit the young person, probably in the school holiday, when I can work with them in a more informal way.

If you have any queries or concerns about the work, any helpful suggestions, or would like further information please contact me at the above address.

Thankyou in anticipation for your support and for your time in completing the questionnaires.

Yours sincerely

Susan Birch
Chartered Senior Educational Psychologist
Learning Support and Education of Children in Public Care Team

Cc Team manager

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

INVESTIGATING KEY FACTORS FOR EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE

I give consent for _____ to take part in the study. This will involve confidential information being collected from _____'s social worker and from school and will involve the Researcher (a Chartered Educational Psychologist) working with _____.

I understand that the information will be treated confidentially and will be anonymous, only being accessible to the Educational Psychologist carrying out the research.

Signed.....Date.....

Position / Relationship to child.....

APPENDIX 2.7

Dear <NAME DESIGNATED TEACHER>

Re

I am currently undertaking a Doctorate in Educational Psychology at University College London. As part of this study I am carrying out a piece of research investigating the key factors in improving the educational attainment of children in public care (looked after children). As part of the Education of Children in Public Care Team, I hope very much that this piece of work will help in targeting support for children in care in but more widely to all children in care nationally through contributing to our knowledge in this area.

X has been chosen to take part in the study, parental consent has been gained and his social worker has discussed this with him/her. X's social worker has completed a questionnaire. I would be very grateful if you would now support this work by filling out the attached questionnaire and returning it to me in the enclosed S.A.E.

The study is looking at factors which enhance the resilience of children in care and hence contribute to improved educational attainment, which as we know, is a key success factor for adult life. I have chosen to work with 3 groups of young people, from year 4, year 7 and year 10, looking at their experience of education, support for their education and also factors such as their pre-care experiences

I am starting the work with a pilot study and I have chosen to work with the group of year 10 pupils as well as one pupil from each of the other age groups for this. I have chosen the young people from these age groups randomly.

The work will extend over three years. I will explain to the young people involved that I will provide them with general feedback from the work although this may not be directly and it will not be for some time. It is important that the young people understand that information gathered is used anonymously as part of a group and that information about individual young people will not be presented in any way that individuals can be identified.

I would therefore be very grateful if you would complete the questionnaire and return it to me as outlined above.

If you have any queries or concerns about the work, any helpful suggestions, or would like further information please contact me at the above address.

Thankyou in anticipation for your support and for your time in completing the questionnaires, when we all seem to be running to stand still.

Yours sincerely

Susan Birch
Chartered Senior Educational Psychologist
Learning Support and Education of Children in Public Care Team

APPENDIX 2.8

Key to scoring the risk and protective factors

The question numbers refer to the amended questionnaires C and D as found in Appendices 4.3 and 4.4.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

| | Factor | Response to Questionnaires A and B (Study 1) or C and D (Study 3) | Interview response (Study 2) | Other (Questionnaires E, F and G, Study 3) | Rated as positive [+1] if |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|--|---|
| Within child | Internal locus of control | | | Questionnaire G | Internalising score (see below) |
| | Learned to read early | SW Q.16. | Q 3a | | At first school or earlier. |
| | Plans and Aspirations | SW Q 15 and T Q 11 | Q 5a-c | | If clear plans with some research / reasoning behind them |
| Pre-care (birth family) Environment | Adequate parental care | SW Q8 | Q2d | | If all of 3 categories of abuse, neglect, drug and alcohol abuse rated as 3 or below or YP comments |
| | Parental interest in education | SW Q 8 | Q2e | | Rated as 3 or below on Q.8 or YP comments |
| Care Environment | Adult interested in education in care placement | SW Q 19 & 20 T Q 14 & 15 | Q4d | | Adult identified from any source |
| | Resources and place to do homework | SW Q 17 & 18 T Q 12 & 13 | Q4a-c | | If any yes responses given with details |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------|------|--|---|
| | Successful friends not in care | SW Q 14 T Q 10 | Q 3h | | If yes by SW / T and / or young person describes normal peer relationship with peers outside care |
| School Environment | Adult to talk to | | Q3e | | If yes |
| | Other achievements and involvements in school | T Q 6 | Q 3d | | If given by T or by YP |

RISK FACTORS

| | Factor | Response to Questionnaires A and B (Study 1) or C and D (Study 3) | Interview response (Study 2) | Other (Questionnaires E, F and G, Study 3) | Rated as present [-1] if |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Within child | Poor social skills | SW Q 13 T Q 9 | Q 3h | Questionnaires E and F, prosocial scale | SW / T average score is 3 or below out of 8 &/or YP describes problems in peer relationships &/or low Questionnaire s E and F prosocial score (mean of the two) |
| | Behaviour Difficulties | SW Q 23 T Q 16 | Excluded from school or comments about being thrown out of lessons, rude to teachers | Questionnaire s E and F, total and conduct scores | Comments about poor behaviour &/or high total or conduct score on Questionnaire E and F (mean of the two) |
| | Low self-esteem | SW Q 7 T Q 8 | | | If average score from SW and T is 3 or below out of 8 |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| Pre-care (birth family) environ ment | Parents with mental health problems | SW Q 8 | Comments from YP | | SW Q 8 score of 3 or higher out of 8 |
| | Drug &/or alcohol abuse within the home | SW Q 8 | Comments from YP | | SW Q 8 score of 3 or higher out of 8 |
| | Child mal- treatment | SW Q 8 (categories sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect) | Comments from YP | | SW Q 8 score of 3 or higher out of 8 on any of the four categories |
| Care environ ment | High number of placements | SW Q 6 | Q 2a | | More than 3 care placements |
| | Residential care | SW Q 6 | Q2a | | If in residential care or have spent time in residential care then yes |
| School Environ ment | Excluded from school | SW Q 23 T Q 16 | Comments from YP | | If evidence of exclusions |
| | Truancy / non- attendance | | Comments from YP about significant non- attendance – truancy / bunking | | Scored if comments from any participant about truancy or poor attendance |

APPENDIX 2.9

TABLE A : Return of the consent forms and Questionnaire A's in Study 1

| Young Person | School Year | Reason for lack of return of questionnaire |
|--------------|-------------|--|
| Charlotte | 3 | The social worker had changed and the forms were not passed on to the new worker. |
| Billy | 6 | Billy was about to transfer to secondary school and there were issues about the school of choice being available. He was living with his mother and it was felt by the social worker that involvement at this time was not appropriate. |
| Amy | 10 | This young person left care to move back to her mother's just after the forms were sent out. |
| Niamh | 10 | Niamh was studying at a grammar school for her GCSE's and although happy for questionnaires to be completed, she felt very strongly about keeping her school and care experiences separate. Questionnaires A and B were completed. |
| Philip | 10 | No information was received about this young person. |
| Pauline | 10 | No information was received about this young person. |
| Jack | 10 | Jack lived and was educated out of county. It was hoped that a meeting could be set up although unfortunately this fell through. Questionnaires were never received. |
| Kerry | 10 | Kerry was living at home with her mother who was very concerned about her being involved in the study as she was acting as a young carer for her mother and was already involved in consultations. Her mother was very wary about revisiting issues about her being in care. Questionnaire A was completed. |
| Michael | 10 | The social worker was unavailable for involvement. No-one else could help. |
| Tracy | 10 | The social worker completed the consent form and questionnaire for Tracy. The researcher spoke to her on the phone as she lived in one of the authority's residential homes, and she agreed to meet. However, after three unsuccessful attempts to meet, it was felt that she had too much going on at the time. She was absconding from the home and was involved with the youth offending team as well as the local child guidance clinic. |
| Jade | 10 | No information was received. |
| Carla | 10 | The social worker for Carla was also involved with Tracy and again completed and sent back the consent form and questionnaire. However, Carla was then removed from care as she moved back home to her mother as she was pregnant. The Pupil Referral Unit which she was attending offered to complete the teacher form although this would be retrospective and lack information due to her poor attendance. |
| Chris | 10 | The social worker completed the consent form although the birth parents declined that Chris should be involved as he was to be seen by a clinical psychologist in order to contribute to an upcoming court case. He was attending an EBD residential school and was finding it difficult to cope. |

APPENDIX 2.10

TABLE B *Protective and risk factors present for the participants*

| Participant | Protective Factors | | Risk Factors | |
|-------------|--|--|---|--|
| | Within-Child | Environmental | Within-Child | Environmental |
| Tracy | No aspirations [0] | Interested adult [+1] No successful friends not in care [0] Support for learning in the care environment [+1] | Friendships scores average 4/8 [0] In care as seen as beyond parental control [-1] | Permanently excluded from school – part-time placement at PRU (where attendance is poor) [-1] Two care placements [0] |
| Carla | General aspirations – to find a job [+1] | Interested adult [+1] No successful friends not in care [0] Support for learning in the care environment [+1] | Friendships scores average 5/8 [0] In care as seen as beyond parental control [-1] | Part-time placement at PRU [-1] 1 care placement [0] |
| Kerry | Aspiration to be a vet [+1] | Interested adult [+1] Successful friends not in care [+1] Support for learning at home from Mum [+1] | Friendships scores average 3/8 [-1] | Number of placements unclear, but various [-1] Parent with mental health problems [-1] |
| Niamh | Aspirations to do A levels [+1] | Interested adult (foster carer) [+1] Successful friends not in care [+1] Support for learning in the home environment [+1] | Friendships scores average 6.7/8 [0] | Two care placements [0] |

APPENDIX 2.11

Table C – Background Information

| Participant | Age first taken into care | Reason taken into care | Care Status | No. care placement moves | Contact with birth family | Other important adults | Risk factors present in Young person's birth home environment - scored as at least "some relevance" |
|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Carla | 14 | Beyond parental control | Accommodated | 2 (Home -> Foster care -> Children's Home) | Mother Maternal Grandmother Siblings | Key worker in children's home | Parental divorce (5) Sexual abuse (4) |
| Tracy | 15 | Beyond parental control | Accommodated | 1 (Home -> Children's home) | Mother Father – phone contact Siblings Maternal great-Grandmother | Key worker in Children's home | Parental divorce (3) Family illness (3) |
| Kerry | 7 | Neglect | Full care order | "Various – foster carers and children's homes – not recorded"? NOW HOME | Mother (lives with) Father Siblings | | Lack of parental education (3) Lack of parental interest in education (3) Parental mental illness (6) Parental divorce (6) Family illness (6) Bereavement (6) Sexual abuse (8) Emotional abuse (6) |
| Niamh | 12 | Parents couldn't provide care | Full care order | 3 (Home -> foster carer -> foster carer) | Mother Siblings | Foster carer | Lack of parental education (3) Lack of parental interest in education (6) Parental divorce (6) Sexual abuse (8) Emotional abuse (6) |

Table D – Friendships and support within care placement

| Friendships at school | | | Friendships outside school | | Friendships in care placement | | Friends outside care system who are successful in school | Aspirations | Homework | | Resources in care placement | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|----------|------|-----------------------------|----------|----------------|
| Social worker | Designated teacher | | Social worker | Designated teacher | Social worker | Designated teacher | | | Place | Time | Books | Computer | Library ticket |
| 4 | | 4 | | | 4 | | No | All up in the air | Y | N | Y | | N |
| 6 | 4 | 6 | Great concern | | 6 | 3 | No | Live independently and find a job | Y | N | Y | Y | N |
| 3 | | 3 | | | - | | Yes | To be a vet | Y | N | N | Y | Y |
| 7 | 7 | 7 | 4 | | 7 | - | Yes | To do well at school, then no specified plans | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |

Table E – Educational Factors

| Participant | Educational Placement | No. extraordinary school moves | Personal Education Plan | SATs results | Reading / spelling ages | Other attainments in educational placement | Support in school | Exclusions | Adult supportive of education | Who attends parents evenings | Self-esteem | |
|-------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | Social worker | Designated teacher |
| Carla | Pupil referral Unit (Tuition – single registered) | 0 | Y | - | - | - | - | Permanent Nov 2000 | Mother | Mother | 3 | - |
| Tracy | Pupil Referral Unit (Dual registered but not attending school) | 0 | Y | - | CA 14.8 SpA: 11.2 Young's Parallel) CA: 16.1 RA (Acc) 11.08 (Comp) 12.06 Neale | - | PRU and Youth Worker | 0 | Key worker – children's home | Parents / Mother | 5 | 3 |
| Kerry | Local Upper School | 0 | Y | - | - | - | - | 0 | Head of Year | Mother | 3 | - |
| Niamh | Local Grammar School | 0 | Y | KS3 (TA) Maths 5 English 6 Science 5 KS3 Test Science 5 | - | None | Learning Support Teacher in years 7, 8 & 9 (within school) | 0 | Form tutor and foster carer | Foster carer | 3 | 6 |

APPENDIX THREE

MATERIAL RELATED TO STUDY TWO

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Appendix 3.1 | Leaflet for young people about the interview study |
| Appendix 3.2 | Consent form for Interview Study |
| Appendix 3.3 | Semi-structured interview Proforma |
| Appendix 3.4 | Interview transcripts |
| Appendix 3.5 | The Case Studies – ‘Len’ and ‘Michelle’ |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>How can I be involved?</u> | Susan Birch | County Council |
| You can either: | Educational Psychologist | and |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Talk to Charlie at 'Be Heard' and he will put us in contact. | | University College London |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Phone me on | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Email me on | And University College London | Being in care and in school |
| THANKYOU FOR READING THIS! | Tel: | How can we make things better? |
| | Email: | |

Hello!

My name is Susan Birch and I am carrying out some research into what might make things better for children and young people in care, in school.

We're thinking about what helps and what really doesn't help.

What will this involve?

This will involve social workers and teachers in school answering some questions on a questionnaire about you and your experiences. I would also like to talk to some of YOU about YOUR experiences – what you think has helped and what has made things difficult. I would ask you to fill out some questionnaires with me. This will all be done anonymously – no-one will know which answers are about or from which young person. No-one will know the answers are about you.

Why should I be involved?

- To represent your views and to have them expressed in and nationally without anyone knowing they're from you.
- To help us find out more so we can try and make things better.
- To gain a small gift as a "thankyou" for taking part.
- I will feedback to you in a group what we found out in about a year's time – if Charlie and I can find you!

APPENDIX 3.2

Investigating key factors in the educational attainment of children in public care – using a risk and resilience framework

I consent to take part in this interview study and understand that the interview will be taped and notes will be taken.

I also understand that the information collected will be anonymised so that information which I give will not be identifiable. The information collected is for the purposes of the research alone unless it is deemed that there is a risk to my safety when the information may be passed on, but only after discussion with myself.

Signed.....Date.....

Name.....[in block capitals please].

APPENDIX 3.3

INVESTIGATING KEY FACTORS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN PUBLIC CARE

Semi Structured Interview

PHASE ONE

Welcome - establishing rapport- clarifying purpose of interview - clarifying confidentiality and exclusions to this.

1a. Welcome

Introduce self

'Problem-free talk' – e.g. what lessons are they missing, are they having a good day at school etc.

Thank young person for coming, check young person is comfortable (seating, temperature, do they need a drink)

Check time available

1b. Introductory Statement

Thank young person for talking with me

Check received leaflet and how much the social worker/ children's rights officer told them

Clarify purpose of interview –

"I have come to see you today as I am carrying out a piece of research to look at the kind of things which happen to young people in public care - good things and bad things. I want to see if we can find things which might help young people in care to do better at school.

I will be asking you lots of questions, I hope that's OK. There aren't any right or wrong answers as they are questions about you and your experiences. If there's anything you don't want to answer or don't feel comfortable answering, just say and that's fine. The information you give me today will be anonymous, so no-one, apart from me will know who said what. Your name will not be against anything that you say to me.

It's OK for you to tell me anything within this interview although if you tell me something which might suggest that you are not safe, I will need to pass that on to your social worker. As you know, I do work in... as an Educational Psychologist [check they know what that means and explain], but the information you give me today will be completely separate from any other work I do.

So, as I said there are no right or wrong answers. I just want to hear about your experiences and your views about what is happening and what has happened to you.

I am very keen that you will know a bit about what this research tells is, for example about what might help young people in future to do better at school. The work will not be finished until next year, but I will do my best to ensure that you receive a letter from me outlining the results or are offered a time to meet with other young people who took part and receive feedback. The social workers, teachers and ECPC staff who took part and helped will receive similar feedback."

Check what lesson / activity they have next and that if they want some time after the interview, either with me or alone, then that is OK.

Let them know that the interview will be taped – helping the interviewer to recall what was said. Check whether the young person has any questions. Ask them to sign the consent form acknowledging that they are happy to go ahead.

PHASE 2

"The first few questions will ask you a bit about your family and school background, so that I know a little bit about you."

2a. "Can you tell me about the people you have lived with, starting with your birth family".

Probes: Where did you live?
 for how long?
 brothers and sisters?
 when did you go into care and why?

2b. "And what about schools?"

Probes: Where
 How old were you

2c. "Do you know why you went into care and why you are in care now?"

Probe: Can you tell me about why you are in care ?

2d. "Tell me about when you were living with your birth parents; how did they look after you?"

2e. "In what ways were your birth parents interested in your school-work?"

" Did they help you?"

PHASE 3

"These next questions are about school."

3a. "When did you learn to read - can you remember?"

3b. "On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is "I'm not good at reading at all" and 10 is "I am an excellent reader" where would you say you are now?"

3c. "Tell me about school, how do you feel about school?"

Probes: What do you enjoy in school?
 What don't you enjoy in school?

3d. "What are you good at, at school?"

Probe: Reading , writing , maths , different subjects

3e. "Does anyone help you at school? In what ways?"

Probes: With work?
 Someone to talk to?

**3f. "Do you feel your school and carers talk a lot?"
 "How about your school and social worker?"**

Probes: Can you tell me when they talk to each other?
 Who comes to parents' evenings
 Who comes to sports day / school plays?

3g. "What do you think about other pupils knowing that you are in care?"

Probes: Do the other young people in your class know you are in care?
 Do you think they treat you differently because you are in care?
 Now or in the past?

3h. "Tell me about your friendships. Would you say you have a lot of friends? What do you like to do with your friends?"

PHASE 4

"These next questions are about where you live now."

4a. "Where do you do your homework?"

4b. "Can someone help you with school work?"

Probes: Do they?
 In what ways?

4c. "What do you have at home to help you with your schoolwork?"

Probes: Are there lots of books you can use?
 A computer?
 Do you have a library ticket?

4d. "Who asks you at home about school and how you are getting on?"

4e. "Does anyone from your birth family ask you about school and about how you are getting on?"

4f. "How does your social worker think you are getting on at school?"

PHASE 5

"I'd like to ask you about your plans and dreams for the future."

5a. "Do you think about what might happen next year?"

5b. "What do you want to do when you leave school?"

5c. "Where do you see yourself when you are 25 years old?"

Probes: If we had a video of you next year, after you'd left school and
 after 10 years, what do you think we'd see?

5d. "Where do you think these people would see you when you are 20 years older?"

Teacher

Carer

Social Worker

Mum

Dad

Sibling

other interested adult?

PHASE 6

"I know that you've had lots of changes in your life which some people would find hard."

6a. "How would you say that you have coped with being in care?"

Probe: Well
 Not very well

6b. "What has helped you?"

6c. "Has there been anything which hasn't helped?"

PHASE 7

"Well, just to finish. Thankyou for talking to me so openly. I've really enjoyed spending this time with you.

Are there any questions you'd like to ask? Or is there anything else you'd like to say before we finish? Is there anyone else you'd like to talk to?

Goodbye and thankyou

APPENDIX 3.4

THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

David
Celia
Bobby
Len
Michelle
Robert
Johnny
Paula

Interview with David

2a and 2b

1 *Can you tell me about the people you have lived with, starting with your birth*
2 *family?*

3 Starting with my birth family... I lived with my birth family for about year and a
4 half and then Mum and Dad, they split up and then I mainly lived with my
5 Mum but saw my Dad quite a lot, every two weeks then at the age of 5, I
6 stopped seeing him, apparently my Mum and dad had an argument. Then my
7 mum had another child think by the time I was about 4 and then I was 7, she
8 left, she said she was going to Germany for two weeks so I went to stay with
9 nanna and ended up staying there for two years. The my dad found me again
10 in N so I went with my Dad to go to court to see if he could get me
11 back, he did, then I (...) into foster care for several reasons and school was
12 good and bad really. School well, first schools I was in for half a year, to a
13 years and then I moved cos I was in care

14 *Where about was that?*

15 This was in A

16 And then I went to OG in year 5 and it was in year 5, year 6 (....) they
17 did the best they could, I tried to run away from school umm... (...) and then I
18 met Tim and Tim's been.. for five and a half years and then I came to the
19 G. I've been suspended seven times and umm.. I could probably still do
20 better than I am doing.

21 *OK. So do you have any brothers or sisters?*

22 I do have..not real ones. I do have, they're all halves, all half brothers and
23 sisters.

24 *And did it not, you said that Dad found you and got you back through the*
25 *courts, and you came back to A. Did that not work out? That you then*
26 *ended up going into foster care?*

27 Well, I hadn't seen my Dad for two years so..practically, we had trouble
28 getting on so

29 *So were you accommodated, was it Dad saying, or was it you asking to go*
30 *into care?*

31 No, my Dad put me into care.

32 *So are you accommodated now David or are you on a care order?*

33 Don't know.

34 *OK, there might be things which we come back to or that we'll cross over as*
35 *we talk and the idea of the questions is to just give us a stimulus really. OK,*

36 *the next one is about that really.*

2c

37 *Do you know why you went into care and why you are in care now?*

38 No

39 *Cos we talked a little bit about that, you said you and your Dad weren't getting*
40 *on and then he put you into care. But you're not any clearer about what the*
41 *reasons were for that.*

2d

42 *If you can remember, tell me about when you were living with your birth*
43 *parents, how did they look after you?*

44 Can't remember

45 *How about when you were with dad later on?*

46 Treated me all right. Took me to the Isle of Wight once or twice, uhh, kind of
47 like treated me same as my Mum did when we were together.

2e

48 *And, again this is difficult because you were so young, in what ways were*
49 *they interested in your school work?*

50 In what way were they interested – I don't know

51 *Do you feel they were interested in your school work?*

52 Don't know about Mum and don't know about Dad, don't know

53 *Can you remember if they ever helped you or did reading with you or*
54 *anything?*

55 My dad did do some reading with me when I was in A and my Mum
56 always used to help me with imaginative stuff...(I suppose..?)

57 *O.K. these next questions are about school which we started talking about.*
58 *Answer these as best you can David.*

PHASE 3

3a

59 *Can you remember when you learned to read?*

60 No

61 *Do you have any feeling about whether it was the same as everyone else or*
62 *that you were at school and everyone else was reading and you were still*
63 *finding it hard or..?*

64 I didn't find reading hard, so.. I might have been taught at school, but ..

3b

65 *And on a sort of.. scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is I'm useless at reading and*
66 *literacy and 10 is I'm brilliant, where would you say you are now ?*

67 About a six

68 *And what would your description of 6 be?*

69 Not rubbish, but not exactly brilliant. Could probably do better

70 *Just over half-wayish*

3c

71 *And generally tell me about school, how do you feel about school?*

72 School is

73 *Do you enjoy school?*

74 Depends on the lessons. If its something like technology and I know what I've
75 got to do, say instead of doing something like maths where I've got to go
76 through anything and I et worried so...cos I hate the subject..(...)?

77 *Is there anything which you really don't enjoy in school?*

78 Geography, R.S.

79 *What is it about RS that you particularly don't enjoy?*

80 Don't know I just can't , just don't like it for some reason.. I just find the lesson
81 a drag and just want to get out of it

82 *Did you enjoy the primary schools you went to? Was that a positive time?*
83 *A and OG?*

84 A was alright I suppose, until I was 6 months into it, other people
85 come up to me and try start fights with me in the school, I didn't want to, but
86 they were always...and then there was OG and that was better...(...?)
87 and then I came up to the G and I changed, I ended up doing the
88 fighting so...

89 *Right.. can you think David what it was that made you start doing the fighting.*
90 *What changed?*

91 *I was starting in foster care, so it as probably all the... (?) so that's probably*
92 *what I did*

93 *How are things now?*

94 Now, I was suspended on Tuesday, so then I've just come back Wednesday

95 *What was that for*

96 That was for fighting

3d

97 *What are you good at school?*

98 In what sense

99 *Things that you're successful at?*

100 Things what I'm successful at, what, lessons?

101 *Either, lessons and the other things too?*

102 Lessons – I'd probably say PE, umm.. maths, English not too sure about, I
103 can do well at art, RS, I do do well but can't hack the lessons so.. geography,
104 I'm OK in, that would be a success last year, but I haven't handed in any

- 105 major work so far?
- 106 *What about the other things?*
- 107 Technology, I do OK, I could do better. Umm... Science, it all depends what
108 we're doing, if we're doing an experiment I find it dull ..(?)
- 109 *Do you take part in any clubs or any other activities around the school?*
- 110 No
- 3e**
- 111 *And does anybody help you at school or have they helped you at school?*
- 112 I have had help for a while in year 7 with my spelling (?) so ..
- 113 *Was that with work?*
- 114 In year 8 I had a anger management course
- 115 *Who was that with*
- 116 That was with Mrs D and somebody else... (?)
- 117 *Is there anybody in school you feel you can talk to?*
- 118 Yeah my Head of year or Deputy Head of year and probably a couple of other
119 teachers
- 3f**
- 120 *And thinking about the relationship between the school and you carers,*
121 *David, do you feel your school and your carers talk a lot. Do they*
122 *communicate?*
- 123 What, my actual foster carers?
- 124 Yeah
- 125 Yes and no, the only time mainly is when I've had a suspension, the only time
126 I can guarantee, other than that or if anything else goes wrong, the schools
127 would probably phone up my foster carers
- 128 *How about your school and Tim , your social worker?*
- 129 School and Tim, I think they do but I don't know how much
- 130 *And what about things like Sports Days, school plays who would come to*
131 *those? More positive things I suppose. Or are you not that interested in those*
132 *kinds of things anyway?*
- 133 Plays I don't generally go for, sports days no-one would come probably
134 anyway because everyone's busy which..(?)
- 3g**
- 135 *What do you think about other pupils knowing that you are in care David?*
- 136 Not too bothered
- 137 *Do the other pupils in your class know that you're in care?*
- 138 Most of them do, yeah
- 139 *Do you think they treat you any differently?*

140 No, treat me normally

141 *Has that ever been the case in the past?*

142 No, I don't think so

3h

143 *Tell me about your friendships. Would you say you've got lots of friends?*

144 Yeah, I've got a fair few friends

145 What do you like to do with your friends?

146 Play football in school and see, couple of friends outside of school don't go to
147 this school, and the people I'm living with..(?), play football. Sometimes go up
148 town with foster sister or go to the cinema with foster brother (if we can be
149 bothered to go to the cinema or something)

150 *The friends out of school, are they mainly umm, young people you've met*
151 *from where you live?*

152 No, they're (?). They all go to Q, stuff like that

153 *Do you have friends who are in care or are most of your friends outside*
154 *care?*

155 I don't think I have any...

PHASE 4

4a

156 *Right and these next questions are about where you live now – where*

157 Where I live now

158 *Yeah, where you're living at the moment. Where do you do your homework?*
159 *Have you got somewhere to do your homework?*

160 In my room

161 *You've got a desk in there or something*

162 Set of drawers, I lean on that. I could do it downstairs in the dining room or
163 conservatory

164 *So you've got plenty of quiet spaces.*

165 Yeah

4b

166 *Does anybody help you with school work*

167 No, most of the time they don't really know what I'm doing

168 *So most of the time, you don't need help?*

169 It all depends on what it is, sometimes I may ask for help if I'm not too sure, or
170 sometimes I'll just leave it and ask the teacher when I get back.

4c

171 *And what do you have at home to help you with your school work? Are there*
172 *books, a computer?*

173 There is a computer and ... we've got a computer and also a few books
174 somewhere

175 *What about a library ticket?*

176 I did have one, but (?)

4d

177 *And who at home asks you about school and about how you're getting on?*

178 Mainly Paul

179 *And Paul is... your foster dad*

180 Yeah, my foster dad

181 *How long have you lived with them David?*

182 Umm, two years in August

183 *And you said there's a foster brother and a foster sister.. are they about your*
184 *age?*

185 One of them is, their son is and their daughter is 13 – 14 this year.

186 *Get on well do you?*

187 Generally, yeah. We have a laugh sometimes, no different to any other (?)

4e

188 *And does anyone from your birth family ask you about school how you are*
189 *getting on?*

190 No. Don't think so. Not unless Tim speaks to my Dad and passes it on. My
191 Dad was once curious but now he doesn't seem too bothered.

192 *No grandparents or Aunts or Uncles?*

193 I see my Grandad about a month ago, he asked me how I was doing, I saw
194 my Aunt about 3 about a month ago, and then she asked me about what was
195 happening

196 *Are they on your Mums side or your dad's?*

197 Both on my step Mum's side

198 *Your step Mum's?*

199 *Yeah, my Dad got married again so..(?)*

4f

200 *And how does Tim think you are getting at school?*

201 I don't know. I've never asked him the question so, he probably thing I could
202 do better. I doubt he'd say I'm doing terrible cos of my past.

PHASE 5

5a

203 *OK, this next section is about your plans and dreams for the future. O.k. Do*
204 *you think about what might happen next year? What you might be doing*
205 *next year.*

206 This time next year? I'll probably be back in school, doing my GCSE's. After, I
207 don't know what I'll do, cos my foster parents want me to go to college, but I
208 don't know what I want to do

209 *Is someone helping you with that?*

210 My foster Dad offers,...(?) woodwork, cos I want to do a course, football, I
211 want to do one thing..I think football is a bit too far-fetched, so, I'm still..(?)

212 *Do you see someone for careers in school, someone from Connexions who*
213 *can help?*

214 I was supposed to see someone last Tuesday, but because I was suspended
215 it had to be cancelled, so.. and re-arranged

5b

216 *And this again, links in, I think perhaps we've already answered this, but if*
217 *there's anything else, what do you want to do when you leave school?*

218 Don't know.

219 *It's that bit about woodwork, football, probably college to do something?*

220 I don't have a clue so...

5c

221 *And where do you see yourself David, say, when you are 25.*

222 I don't know, 25

223 *Where would you like to be*

224 Probably, living on my own, being independent, doing things I want to do,
225 things like that. Go out with friends in the evenings

226 *Workwise any thoughts*

227 Haven't got a clue

5d

228 *And then, I'm going to ask you, there are several people I've got here and I*
229 *want you to think about where you think they might see you in 20 years time,*
230 *What you think their view of you might be. Say the first one is your teacher,*
231 *Ms G, what do you think she might say?*

232 Don't know

233 *Paul, your foster Dad, or your foster Mum*

234 I think they'd probably like me to have a job or something

235 *What about Tim*

236 Probably the same

237 *What about your birth Mum?*

238 Haven't got a clue

239 *Your Dad?*

240 Haven't got a clue. I haven't spoken to my Dad for two years and I haven't
241 seen my Mum since I was 6-7, so..

242 *OK Or, umm, one of your half brothers or sisters who you see the most, are*
243 *you in contact with them?*

244 Not really. They're all younger than me, so..

245 *And is there any other adult who is interested in how you are getting on and*
246 *might have a view?*

247 Probably I suppose I could say my Aunt or my Grandad, who I see, every
248 time I see them they ask how I'm doing, so I do have some contact with them
249 but not very often once every six months or twice a year.

250 *What do you think they might see you doing when you're 35ish?*

251 Don't know.

PHASE 6

6a

252 *OK, this is really the last bit of the interview David ,I know you've had lots of*
253 *changes in your life and some people would find that really hard. I wondered*
254 *how you would you say that you have coped with being in care.*

255 When I was first put into care, I didn't cope with it that well cos I was telling
256 the first set of foster carers to go away (?) swearing, practically just being
257 abusive, trying to have fights with people, for no particular reason, so. Then I
258 got older and kind of realised it was pretty stupid, calmed myself down a bit,
259 ended up moving again, another set of foster carers, (?) the first couple of
260 weeks were really iffy, I was a bit abusive and angry, about moving. Now I'm
261 here, can still be abusive, I do tend to start arguments for no particular
262 reason, but don't tend to fight around the house.

263 *Why did you move that second time?*

264 Weren't really getting on.

6b

265 *Can you think of anything that's helped you?*

266 Helped?

267 *Helped you cope?*

268 I used to go to the SN Centre. I used to go there and had the anger
269 management courses which helped.

270 *When did you go to the SN centre, was it when you were much*
271 *younger?*

272 No (?)

273 *What kind of thing did you do there?*

274 Sit there, talked to (?)

6c

275 *Has there been anything which really hasn't helped?*

276 What that hasn't helped, in what way?

277 *Hasn't helped you cope, so its actually made things harder*

278 Probably, not being in contact with my family, that's probably made things
279 harder cos I'd like to see them, but my dad can't handle it, so (?) It doesn't
280 matter anymore , he can do what he wants it's his choice.

281 *How about your Mum*

282 What my real mum or my step Mum

283 *Your real mum?*

284 My real Mum, I wouldn't have a clue cos I haven't seen her since I was six. I
285 spoke to Tim... (?) ...she might try and get in contact with me..

286 *Would you like to see her?*

287 I would. Tim has looked into this before..(?)..

288 *You said about step Mum, do you think there's more chance of contact with*
289 *your step Mum than with your Dad*

290 No. To be honest with you, I don't think there's any (possibility of anything?).
291 Possibly with my real mum, but... (?), so

292 *Is there anything else which you feel has hindered you?*

293 No

Interview with Celia

2a

1 *Can you tell me about the people you've lived with, starting with your birth*
2 *family?*

3 o.k. Umm, My Dad..do you want me to go into detail about their personality or
4 just tell you..

5 *No, just who they were and then why you moved and then after I'll ask you*
6 *additional questions if*

7 Sure, alright. My Mum and Dad, my Dad moved away so I was with my Mum,
8 um and then moved back with my Dad and moved up to this area, then lived
9 with my Dad for quite a while and then because of financial difficulties, and
10 the house being taken away from my Dad and things like that, we were put
11 into foster care, um lovely people called M and L, can't remember
12 their second names, um really lovely people and then went back to my Dad
13 and then went back into foster care with um a family called L and T
14 and then moved back with my Dad and I've been with my Dad since. My
15 brother's still..he was moved from L and T to a different foster
16 family. So I'm at home and he's still there. That's about it really, that's who
17 I've lived with.

18 *So, Why did you move from, I'm assuming that Dad always wanted to have*
19 *you, but other reason came and went.*

20 Oh yes

21 *There were financial difficulties which meant you originally went into care,*
22 *then you moved back with Dad but then you moved back, why did you move*
23 *back into foster care?*

24 I can't remember exactly whether it was the first time or the second time that
25 the house had been taken away but both times it was because of financial
26 difficulties and um housing problems and not really having anywhere to live
27 so the best option for my Dad was for us to go into care, that was for the both
28 times but I can't remember which time was for the house.

29 *That's fine. And why is your brother still in foster care?*

30 Yes he's in A, with umm.. I got kicked out actually, not because I was
31 naughty or anything, long story, can I go through it?

32 Yes

33 I told the social services how my brother was being treated by them and they
34 didn't like that so then they said that they didn't want me there any more so by
35 that time my Dad was getting himself sorted out anyway, so I was going to be
36 going home soon anyway, but they said they didn't want me there anymore
37 so I went to live back with my Dad, but because of my brother not being my
38 Dad's real son, parental, um, responsibility, yeah, that my Dad doesn't have for
39 my brother so its not so easy for him to get my brother back as for me, which
40 is ridiculous as far as I'm concerned.

41 *How were the foster carers treating your brother?*

42 Um, terribly I think, I hope they're not fostering, but I think they are, but its not
43 the family themselves, but just one lady, she's um, very strange, she's uh, my
44 brother's got dyslexia and he's..I always used to take the mick of him when

45 we were little, saying your so dumb and so thick and umm I was told by my
46 Dad and family and by social services not to call him thick because that
47 makes him think he is thick, you know put his self-esteem down so I stopped
48 and I didn't think it was right and that was stopped and she would do spelling
49 with him in the evening and if he got one wrong, she'd shout at him and call
50 him and say he was so thick and it got to the point where I walked into his
51 bedroom one day, and he was writing in lines David is thick, David is thick,
52 hundreds pages of it and I thought well this isn't right. So I told social services
53 and they didn't like it. She was a very strange lady.

54 *So, that was the second*

55 Yes that was

56 *And he's not with them anymore, he's with different*

57 Yeah

2b

58 *Right and what about schools*

59 Um, I've been to quite a few primary and middle schools, um but this is the
60 only secondary school I've been to, um, and I love it here.

61 *Can you tell me which primary schools you went to?*

62 Um, as far as I can remember a school called W, spelt W
63 in C and the next one was B and P which
64 was also in C, um and then I moved to um W and went to
65 D Middle School .And that's it and from there I've been, to, I think I've
66 been to like a couple of primary schools but I really can't remember. Cos I
67 was probably only 4 or 5 or something.

68 *So was it in K that your Mum and Dad originally lived*

69 Well no, well, umm when they first got together that was in L, but for
70 most of mine and my brother's childhood we lived in K yes.

71 *So, what I suppose I'm thinking is did you move to B when you moved*
72 *into respite care? Or was that because Dad, did Dad?*

73 Well yes we moved up here to get away form C because my Dad
74 used to live up here when he was younger and family were up here, then we
75 moved up here, got a house and then that's when the problems started, but I
76 had actually been in care when I was very very young but don't know why, um
77 as far as I know it has only been the once, but I've heard things about me
78 being in more than once, but I don't know anything about that so, that's all I
79 can remember really.

80 *Presumably that was in K*

81 Yeah, yeah it was.

2c

82 *We've already kind of talked about this Celia, but if there is anything you*
83 *want to add, do you know why you went into care and why you are in care*
84 *now?*

85 Um, yes, because of the financial problems. The first time when I was a baby,
86 I don't know, but I don't think that's relevant. I'd quite like to find out actually

87 *Can Dad not tell you?*

88 I got told that you get, as soon as your 18, a big file, a file of, depending on
89 what happened to you, a file of, you know, where you've been and foster
90 placements and all that kind of thing, so hopefully when I'm 18 in a few
91 months, I'll get that and hopefully that will answer some questions, I suppose I
92 could ask my Dad, but I don't really want to, I'd rather just find out from the file
93 if it's in there. I don't know about the first time, but the times I can remember it
94 was because of my Dad having financial problems, yeah.

2d

95 *O.k. Again, they're all linking in, can you tell me about when you were living*
96 *with your birth parents, with your Mum and Dad, how did they look after you?*

97 Very very well, very good parents, yeah. Um, my, the care for me, feeding,
98 clothing, the love, absolutely amazing, I'd say, prob, I'd say they were very,
99 very, very good parents compared to some parents I know, but things out of
100 looking after me and my brother affected us and yeah, but caring for us and
101 looking after us, they were both very good

102 *Can you tell me anything about those things outside?*

103 Yeah, drugs, alcohol, abuse, the people my mum knew, yeah, just general stuff I
104 think parents don't do. They do, you know when they're younger and they
105 have their social life and they do the drugs, whatever, but they don't do that
106 when you have children which is what my parents, well my mum did more
107 when we were around which she shouldn't have done but yeah looking after us
108 and feeding us, they did that pretty well.

109 *Is that one of the reasons why your Mum and Dad split up.*

110 No my parents never married, I don't really know why they split up. But I don't
111 ever remember them being together, I don't, it's kind of normal for me to see
112 them not together, I've never really seen them kiss or hug, or. Well, yes I
113 have, but not in a husband and wife way, the way that other mums and dads
114 do and so it was quite normal for me not to see them as a couple but I don't
115 know the reason why, I think, oh my dad went to prison when I was a baby, I
116 think that might have had some kind of pressure on them breaking up and
117 drugs, I think everything really. They don't really get on.

118 *Celia, why did you end up living with your, move to live with your Dad*
119 *rather than staying with your Mum?*

120 Because my Mum set fire to the house And got sent to prison so that really
121 was why we had to move away from C, well we didn't have to move
122 away from C, it's just that my Mum was sent to prison, so she wasn't
123 able to look after us, so my Dad stepped in and then he..

124 *He moved away so you went to live with him*

125 Yeah exactly

126 *How old were you then*

127 I don't know, probably about ten or something

128 *So let me just get this right*

129 It's very complicated

130 *It often is. You were living with Mum and Dad in K and they were looking*
131 *after you and your brother really well.*

132 No it wasn't my Mum and Dad, it was just my Mum

133 *But originally, Mum and Dad produced you and your brother.*

134 Yeah yeah

135 *You were living with your Mum, she looked after you really well but there was*
 136 *drug, alcohol abuse. She was socialising. She had to go into prison so Dad*
 137 *had been into prison before but was now out*

138 That was years ago

139 *And he'd moved away so you then went to live with him and it was when he*
 140 *was having his financial difficulties that you then went into foster care. And*
 141 *how old were you roughly then*

142 I was only about 13, 14

143 *And then you were back with Dad, how long were these periods of foster*
 144 *care, were they short*

145 Yeah when we were first in foster care with M and L we were there
 146 for literally 3 months. Yeah, they were even surprised by the time we were in
 147 there for because Dad had financial problems but then he sorted himself out
 148 and thought it was all alright, so he took us back and then they were
 149 repossessing the house the second time and that was like probably about a
 150 year after and then we went back into foster care and this time we were there
 151 for about a year.

152 *Right. So that must have been quite recent then.*

153 Oh what when we were back with Dad? Yeah, about two years ago now.

2e

154 *Right, I think I'm clear So, a lot of these questions you have to think about*
 155 *how they relate to you OK? So the next questions is in what way were your*
 156 *birth parents interested in your school work?*

157 Very, yeah, my mum always been quite pushy, doing very well, she was doing
 158 a college course herself and when we were living in K she was quite into it,
 159 I remember nights and nights sitting at the table with my Dad, him trying to
 160 teach me my times table and everything and yes they were very good with
 161 that but with my brother, I don't remember so much but I think that might be
 162 my brothers fault because he was always I don't want to do it, I don't want to
 163 do it, whereas I'm different I like school and I like learning and things, so, my
 164 parents were good with helping me with school.

165 *Still are?*

166 Yeah, they think, they know, well I think it is the most important thing and my
 167 Dad always if I need any books for school or anything and always comes to
 168 see me in plays and anything like that, so they're very good with things like
 169 that.

170 *How much contact do you still have with Mum?*

171 Birthdays and Christmas and that's it. I speak to her on the phone quite often,
 172 really every day.

173 *Being nosy Celia, was Mum very young when you were living in K. Was*
 174 *she still going to College or had she gone back?*

175 She wasn't no, she was 35, no she wasn't extremely young, she was about
 176 the same age as my Dad, a couple of years younger than my Dad, he's about

177 45 now so when she was at college, she was doing Art Diploma, no she
178 wasn't extremely young. It depends what you mean by young. Do you mean
179 like..?

180 *I meant that she was still sort of student age herself*

181 Oh no, she wasn't a student because she'd had so many things in her life and
182 she wasn't able to do what she wanted to do at her time, she did try to make
183 things better and go back and doing things. Yeah she was just trying to sort
184 things out and going back and going to college. She wasn't no, student age.

PHASE 3

3a

185 *O.k. the next set of questions are about school. When did you learn to read?*
186 *Can you remember?*

187 Um, quite average age, what is it about 5. I didn't really have a problem with
188 that.

3b

189 *And on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is I am useless at reading and literacy and 10*
190 *is I'm excellent. Where would you say you are now?*

191 Now, 7, 8, depends what book I'm reading, probably about 7

192 *And you're doing A level English.*

3c

193 *And tell me about school, what do you feel about school?*

194 I really enjoy it, I like being here, I like the environment, I like the people, I
195 generally like school, sometimes. When it comes to homework it's a different
196 question. No Yeah, I do like school, I like going to school a lot.

197 *Is there anything you don't enjoy in school?*

198 There's nothing in particular I can think of. There are some teachers I don't
199 particularly like but nothing I don't like.

3d

200 *And what are you good at at school?*

201 Drama , performing arts. I'm quite good at English. Yeah, English and
202 Drama.

3e

203 *Does anyone help you at school Celia and if they do in what ways? Or*
204 *have you had help in the past?*

205 Do you mean extra, like as in teachers normally helping pupils as they do,
206 or..?

207 *I mean in terms of extra with work or also someone to go and talk to and*
208 *taking extra interest in you.*

209 I'm quite close with my old form tutor and I can always go and talk to her and
210 I've had a couple of chats with her a few times, past things. I don't really have
211 anyone in particular that I have lots of help with or anything but there is
212 always someone if I need to talk to, so.

3f

213 *This isn't really relevant to you because you are at home with Dad, but the*

214 *question was do you feel your school and carers talk a lot?*

215 When I was in care, every review I had, um, my Headteacher, Head of Year
 216 would be present so and I did, yeah, it was quite, they always had copies of
 217 my reports and things like that so yeah they were quite

218 *How about school and your social worker?*

219 Sorry?

220 *Cos it was T wasn't it and now it's Z.*

221 Can't really remember them, who's T? Um, what recently. Recently if
 222 they are writing down things about how school, yeah fine and that's it and they
 223 get copies of my reports but they don't really speak to my school as far as I
 224 know as much as they used to when I was in care.

225 *Right and that's kind of appropriate isn't it?*

226 Yeah, I think that's right, if I was having problems at school and I had had
 227 problems at school then I think maybe it should be quite different

228 *So in terms of parents evening, sports day, school play that would be your*
 229 *Dad.*

230 Yeah, mum and dad always came but I suppose recently always dad because
 231 mum hadn't been around for secondary school for me and that for primary
 232 school mum was always there, mum and dad and dad would come up for
 233 secondary school.

3g

234 *And again, thinking back to when you were in care, what do you think about*
 235 *other pupils knowing you were in care?*

236 I don't care, I don't mind

237 *Do the other young people in your class, know that you are in care?*

238 Most of my close friends, yeah, I didn't make it an issue. I didn't really tell that,
 239 don't know, not by choice, I didn't really tell that many people, apart from very
 240 like best friends it would be quite often umm, but I wouldn't care if somebody,
 241 umm I don't know, when I was in care, if everybody in my class knew I
 242 suppose I'd feel a bit, yeah, I don't think I would have liked it as much but my
 243 close friends know, it was always fine, I always told them, they were always
 244 very helpful and they were always there for me

245 *Do you think other pupils have ever treated you any differently because you*
 246 *were in Care?*

247 No

3h

248 *Tell me about your friendships, have you got lots of friends*

249 Yes I've always been alright with making friends and having a good social life,
 250 especially now I think I might have a bit too much of a social life but yes I've
 251 always found it easy to make friends, I like having my friends around, I think
 252 that's my way of getting away from everything really, I think, I've realised that
 253 now, recently, I've realised that because I think why do I spend so much time
 254 with my friends, why do I like, not really, going home, even though it's not
 255 really that bad at home, why do I, and I just realised that's my way of dealing
 256 with things and that's my way of not having everything in the front of my head
 257 constantly. My friends just talking and having a laugh and things like that,
 258 that is my way of dealing with things.

259 *And do you think that's always been the case for you?*

260 Yeah I think so, Yeah.

PHASE 4

261 *The next questions are about where you live now. I'm just wondering... If we*
262 *do it for now and then think about when you were in care.*

263 O.k.

4a

264 *Have you got somewhere quiet to do your homework?*

265 h I don't really do that much work out of school to be honest because we
266 have, I don't know whether you know what the sixth form's like, but we have
267 free periods. I spend most of my, any home work I have to do, I do that in my
268 frees, but if I have extra to do then I will do it at home. We do have a
269 computer a computer desk at home, so I do it there.

270 *And when you were in foster care did you always have somewhere to do your*
271 *homework?*

272 Desk in my room.

4b

273 *And now does someone, can someone help you with school work, at home?*

274 Yeah, my dad.

275 *And when you were in care?*

276 Yeah, foster parents were always quite intelligent and had the computer, very
277 very good computer so I was always able to have any help if I needed it

4c

278 *One of the questions was about what you have at home to help you with your*
279 *school work, you said you have a computer*

280 A computer, yeah.

281 *Are there lots of Books?*

282 Yeah I've got lots of encyclopaedias, a massive set they're very very helpful
283 actually. Helped me through the years.

284 *Do you have a library ticket?*

285 Yeah, for the school library and the W one.

4d

286 *And again, we have covered this one really, who asks you at home about*
287 *school and how you are getting on?*

288 Yeah, my Dad.

289 *But you said mum did to*

290 Yeah mum was always questioning in our phone conversations is how's
291 school. Everyone really, my dad's girlfriend, my grandparents, my brother,
292 um, because I think everyone has always known that school for me, I'm quite
293 good at school, I like it, I enjoy it, it's quite important for me so I think it's a

294 questions that comes up quite often to anyone who knows me anyway, so I've
295 always got someone to talk to or ask for help about school.

4e

296 *The next one, is again repeating really, does anyone from your birth family*
297 *ask you about school. We've covered that one.*

4f

298 *And the last one in this section, is how does your social worker think you are*
299 *getting on at school?*

300 Yeah, they've always said, compared to, I don't want to sound, I don't know
301 what the word is, but they've always said compared to other people who have
302 been in care, I seem to have done better and always kept school as a priority
303 and they've always been quite happy with how I am at school.

PHASE 5

5a

304 *The next section is about your plans and dreams for the future. So do you*
305 *think about what might happen next year?*

306 Always, yes, I'm gonna do next year's A levels, um and then have my year
307 out and then go to University.

308 *What will you do in your year out?*

309 Um, people tell me that having a year out isn't a very good idea cos you can
310 spend lots of money or get used to not doing any work, so I think I might do a
311 college course, I don't know, it's something I know that involves me going to
312 school for like one lesson a week, I mean or two lessons a day or something
313 small so I can still have a year of doing nothing but still be applying myself to
314 school work, but at the same time still have time to have a part-time job to
315 earn some money for Uni. That's about it.

5b

316 *What do you want to do at University, that's the next question! I should know!*
317 *What do you want to do when you leave school? Got o university.*

318 he only thing I am really good at, I'm not going to go to University and do
319 something like science or maths because I will fail instantly and that would be
320 a waste of my time so I might as well do something that I'm good at so I'm
321 going to do performing arts, you still have to get two Bs and Cs for that
322 course, which is still quite high, um, yes, and then that's it, yeah do
323 performing arts. I'm not going to do anything else I don't think.

324 *Do you think you'll get 2 B's and a C – have you got a chance of doing that?*

325 Yes with the Unions you can get 3 C's and still push to get in, but that's not
326 really the point, yes, yes I can get two Bs and the Cs, yes.

5c

327 *And where do you see yourself when you are say, 25.*

328 I don't really like to look that far ahead, but

329 *Where would you like to see yourself?*

330 To have got my performing arts diploma and then maybe I'll join the police
331 force, yeah, yeah I've got that in my head still stuck quite firmly. But we'll see
332 what happens but if all else fails then the police force, definitely cos I used to
333 be in the RAF cadets
334 and the firemen and policemen came to visit us and we've done lots of things
335 like that and I've done lots of things like Duke of Edinburgh Outward Bound

336 and all those sort of things, that kind of thing interests me and also I've been
337 around the police quite a lot through my life and I don't know, it interests me a
338 lot, I've always like to, if I see a police car going past or an ambulance and I
339 always want to go and see what's happening and yes I really like the idea of
340 being in the police force.

341 *That's an interesting combination with performing arts*

342 Yes, I know it's strange, I was thinking because you don't have to have any
343 particular qualifications for the police force so that's why me doing performing
344 arts doesn't, because my heart would be to be an actress or something like
345 that but that's not, maybe maybe maybe, but not very likely so if I've got
346 something set up that doesn't need any specific qualifications then that's fine
347 because I won't have any specific qualifications anyway, maybe I could do
348 some undercover work in the police force.

349 *Umm*

5d

350 *Now think about some different people, where do you think other people*
351 *would see you when you were say 35, one of your teachers who you are*
352 *close to. Maybe your old form tutor who you were saying you're close to*

353 I really don't know to be honest, but, um, I don't know, I really don't know. I
354 suppose they think I'm going to do quite well so yes, maybe you should ask
355 my teacher.

356 *How about your previous carer? Or one of your carers that was important to*
357 *you?*

358 They probably see me as being quite successful and doing quite well. Most
359 of them have always said you'll do well and come across as being, you know
360 and all those sort of things so yes I suppose they might think that I will do
361 quite well. I really don't know what they think of me, I haven't asked them.

362 *So what about your social worker?*

363 Um, I don't know.

364 *What about Mum?*

365 She thinks I'll do very well and she hopes, I don't know, I don't like this
366 question.

367 *What about Dad?*

368 Yes, he's very proud of me, he thinks I'll do well. He'll be proud of me
369 whatever I do anyway so

370 *What about your brother?*

371 Yes, the same, he thinks I'll do well, I think.

372 *And lastly, are there any other adults who've been important to you or*
373 *interested in you. What would their view be?*

374 Yes, I've got a very, very close relationship with my boss, one of my best
375 friends actually. I think she thinks I'll do well as well. I really don't know
376 what she thinks of me, I don't know what she thinks I'll be doing when I'm 35.

377 I don't know.

378 *What was your job, again?*

379 I work in a Delicatessen, making sandwiches and cutting cheese and ham.

380 *At the weekend?*

381 Yes

PHASE 6

6a

382 *o.k. getting near the end now. I know you've had lots of changes in your life*
383 *and some people would find that really hard to cope with, so how would you*
384 *say you've coped with being in care?*

385 I think , I think it's just..what with actually being in care? I think I'm just quite
386 strong person, I don't, as I said earlier, my friends, I block things out and then
387 just deal with my social life, that's what makes me happy. I don't know, I've
388 got this very, I just don't think about things, don't let things bother me and
389 that's just my personality. But I don't know, I think things have affected me
390 in other ways but would be quite, umm, you can see for other people that
391 they've been effected in those ways, but I don't know if I have or I don't know
392 how, I just deal with it.

6b

393 *Is there anything you can think of that's actually helped you?*

394 Having my parents although they are the ones that have done all the
395 problems and everything, they are the people who they are and have made
396 me who I am, being able to deal with things and the love I had from my
397 parents, I think, helped a lot. And the family and yes

6c

398 *And has there been anything which really hasn't helped?*

399 Certain things along the way such as Mum's boyfriends and things like that
400 but I think nothing in particular, I don't really know how to answer that
401 question, too many things that people have made things bad and that have...
402 I can't answer that question sorry.

403 *That's fine. Something else I was thinking of which I should have asked you*
404 *Celia. When you say about your friends and most of your friends are not*
405 *in care, do you have friends who are in care?*

406 I don't have any friends who have been in care or are in care. I know I'm
407 friends with someone who has had her children in care, but I don't know any
408 people, none of my friends have.

409 *And that's basically it, the end of the interview, thank you for talking to me.*

Interview with Bobby

2a

1 *Firstly, can you tell me about the people you have lived with, starting with*
2 *your birth family.*

3 I do not know much about what happened while I was with my mum and, um,
4 and the foster people I've actually lived with, I've been alright in, I think.
5 Settled in there pretty well, I think, we've had a few arguments and that like,
6 social workers wanting to move away from there and sometimes the family
7 have asked if I can move there

8 *Right*

9 And then I've been here over a year.

10 *Right. So how many different foster parents did you live with Bobby? When*
11 *did you leave Mum first of all?*

12 I do not know that

13 *You don't even know how old you were? From a baby or toddler?*

14 Yeah, baby I think

15 *And do you know how many different foster parents you went to?*

16 Seven

17 *Seven different sets of foster parents. What was the longest that you*
18 *stayed with any of them?*

19 Four years

20 *And how old were you then?*

21 14

22 *So was that the one just before you came here?*

23 Yes

24 *So that was when you were 10 until you were 14. So do you have any*
25 *brothers or sisters from your birth family?*

26 Three brothers, three sisters

27 *Where are they all now Bobby?*

28 Four of them were adopted and I get a little contact each month
29 And one lives in A who I see every Saturday, we meet up and go
30 uptown and that.

31 *He, she?*

32 He

33 *Older or younger?*

34 Younger. I'm the oldest.

35 *Oh right. So that's three brother and three sisters I make that? Five, four*
36 *adopted and one in A.*

37 Yes and then there's me.

38 *Oh right, I see*

39 So really there's two brothers,

40 *You've got two brothers*

41 No, really I've got three sisters, no three brothers

42 *And if you're one of the boys*

43 So it will be two sisters, two brothers. No two sisters and three brothers

44 *Alright, four boys*

45 Yes, four boys and two girls.

46 *Right, so why did you leave that last set of foster parents to come here?*

47 Because when I lived, the foster parents that I used to live out, I always lived
 48 near my brother and then we had like arguments and that seemed to take it
 49 that I was older than him I would have been...the family... more than him and
 50 me and John used to have arguments all the time and that and the family
 51 couldn't take it.

52 *And where is he now, is he still with them?*

53 Yes he's still with them

54 *How did you feel about that?*

55 I felt alright really, I was upset when I was leaving but then I thought, felt
 56 alright afterwards. This year, these next two years are important to me
 57 because they're my GCSEs, I thought if I stayed there I wouldn't be able to
 58 get much of my coursework done or anything cos in our bedroom we'd have
 59 arguments every time.

2b

60 *O.k. What about schools Bobby? Can you tell me anything about the schools*
 61 *you've been to? How many or?*

62 Before I went to, before I actually came to, my first foster parents were when I
 63 lived in A, when I lived here and it was going to M First
 64 and then I got moved into G so I had to change school and I went to
 65 G in B and then I got moved from B and I still
 66 went to G and then I came back into A and then lived with my
 67 brother John and then I went to E middle and then I went to
 68 Q and I'm going to Q now.

69 *So that's one, two, three, four schools?*

70 Yes

71 *That's not too bad actually. That's not much worse than if you hadn't moved.*

2c

72 *Do you know Bobby, why you went into care, when you were a baby? When*
 73 *you were little?*

74 Cos, Dad left and Mum couldn't look after us

75 *Did you all go into care at the same time?*
76 We weren't all born at the same time
77 *Of course, you were the oldest and you were a baby*
78 I didn't actually get moved before, my brother John got moved before me.
79 Social services found out what was happening and that, and they chose to
80 move me as well.

81 *Right, so why did John get moved?*
82 Because the same things were happening.

83 *So can you tell me anything about those things Bobby?*

84 No

85 *Can I ask you, do you all have the same Dad?*

86 No

2d

87 *Now the next question is going to be a bit tricky to answer, I'll ask you and*
88 *you'll see why. It was tell me about when you lived with your birth parents,*
89 *how did they look after you?*

90 I don't know

91 *And this is also going to be tricky because obviously you were little, but I'll ask*
92 *you the question so you know. In what ways were your birth parents*
93 *interested in your school work? But as you were a baby it's not really relevant.*

94 Don't know

PHASE 3

3a

95 *The next questions are about school Bobby, o.k. When did you learn to read?*
96 *Can you remember?*

97 No, so long ago I can't remember.

98 *But do you have a sense of being the same as everyone else?*

99 Yes

100 *Or that you needed a bit of extra help?*

100 No, well, I do need some help in reading and writing at the moment still but I
101 do still do the same things as everyone else.

3b

102 *O.k. So on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is I'm not good at reading at all, I'm*
103 *useless and 10 is I'm brilliant at reading, where would you say you are now.*

105 9 ½

106 *Why would you put yourself there?*

107 Cos I still sometimes find it difficult to read

108 *OK. Let me just say that question to you again Bobby. I would be I'm really*
109 *not very good at all and 10 is I'm fantastic, I'm excellent. You, said 9 ½,*
110 *which is really near 10, so you're pretty good.*

111 Yes I'm pretty fair but

112 *A little bit of extra help.*

3c

113 *Right now tell me about school, how do you feel about school?*

114 I'm fine about it, I enjoy it there, I'm glad I actually went to that school
115 they give me the help and that.

116 *What do you enjoy in school Bobby?*

117 Everything

118 *Everything, is there anything that you don't enjoy?*

119 No

120 *What are you good at, at school?*

121 Drama, PE, IT, RS

122 *Do you take part in any clubs or anything?*

123 Um, I'm in the school play at the moment and that's about it.

124 *What's the play?*

125 "Calling All Cars"

126 *Oh I don't know that one. Have you got a big part?*

127 Waiter and a newspaper boy. Our Drama teacher is actually helping us do the
128 play, umm, cos during the Easter holiday that we just had, with Charlie
129 Reston we did the play. I told the teacher about that and she came and
130 watched and she asked me, cos she really needed some help getting
131 people's voices out, because we were doing it in the Limelight Theatre we
132 didn't have any microphones or anything like that. So we had to put our
133 voices out loud and some of my teachers came and watched and they told
134 the drama teacher that I can do it and they said, asked me if I'd like to be in
135 the play.

136 *Oh brilliant*

137 And I said Yeah. I've done it before and I'll do it again.

138 *I was hoping to come to that play with Charlie, but I couldn't because I wasn't*
139 *here.*

140 He's got the video

141 *Oh has he, I might have to see if I can borrow it borrow it, see you all in*
142 *action.*

3e

143 *Does anyone help you at school Bobby?*

144 Umm, teachers

145 *You said you had a little bit of extra help with reading and writing. Is that from*
146 *Learning Support?*

147 Yes

148 *Does anybody else give you any extra help?*

149 Here helps me

150 *We'll talk about that in a bit, how about somebody to talk to, is there*
151 *somebody in school you can talk to?*

152 Yes

153 *Who would that be? Form tutor or*

154 Form tutor, Head of Year, normal teachers really. Cos at school I'm actually a
155 peer supporter myself which means that people who are actually getting
156 bullied at school they can come to me, and if its really important that needs
157 stopping at some point this week, or if they're getting sexually harassed or
158 something, I'm happy to take that straight to the Head of Year and give, take
159 them straight to the Head of Year, explain what they've told me and ask if
160 they can take over.

161 *Do you enjoy doing that Bobby?*

162 Yeah

163 *Are you very busy with lots of things?*

164 No, not really

165 *I suppose that's good really. It means that there's not too much happening.*

3f

166 *Thinking again about school, do you feel your school, who is your link person 167here?*

168 Jane

169 Do school and Jane talk a lot?

170 Yeah

171 *When do they talk?*

172 At my school, consultation days and parent evenings which is really
173 consultation days. Jane sometimes phones school to see how I'm getting
174 on.

175 *And who comes to parents evenings?*

176 Jane

177 *Sports Days?*

178 Jane and staff from here.

3g

179 *The next questions Bobby have come out of the research. What do you think*
180 *about other pupils knowing that you are in care?*

181 Most of them don't know. There's only a few who know. I've told, they don't
182 mind really. All I say is just that it's like, what I tell them is like I'm in foster
183 care and it's like a normal family.

184 *Yes and do you think anyone in school has ever treated you any differently*
185 *because you are in care?*

186 No

187 *Or in the past, teachers?*

188 No

3h

189 *And tell me about your friendships Bobby. Have you got lots of friends?*

190 Yes

191 *What do you like doing together?*

192 Playing football mainly.

193 *Do your friends come here? Do you go to their houses?*

194 Sometimes occasionally go there, sometimes come here. We try and arrange
195 things in the holidays cos we've got lots of coursework to do. We can't have
196 the same writing and all that.

197 *And Bobby are most of your friends in care or out of care?*

198 Out. Some of them are mixed actually

Phase 4

4a

199 *The next questions are about here, about where you live now. Where do you*
200 *do your homework?*

201 Down here or upstairs in my room. Somewhere quiet.

4b

202 *And is there somebody who can help you with school work?*

203 Yes

204 *What ways do they help?*

205 They help me find out information, help me revise. Got a computer here
206 which helps me so they help me find stuff on the computer

4c

207 *And the next question is what do you have here to help you with your school*
208 *work? You've already told me there's a computer. Anything else?*

209 There's a dictionary and books about schoolwork and that

210 *Do you have a library ticket?*

211 Uh-huh

212 *Do you use it?*

213 Sometimes, yeah. When I actually need to get a book out, yeah.

4d

214 *And who asks you here about school and how you are getting on?*

215 All the staff. They ask me how I'm getting on, if I've got any homework and that.

4e

217 *Does anybody from your birth family ask you about school?*

218 When I see my Mum, she does.

219 *How often do you see your parents?*

220 Twice a year

221 *Brother?*

222 We both ask the same questions really. He used to skive a lot, I tried to get
223 him stopping skiving.

224 *Where does he go to school?*

225 The G same as Jo, and umm, I told him to stop it cos my friends at
226 school used to skive and now look where they're heading. They're getting
227 really low GCSE grades, some of them are even getting U's and that. And
228 now they've stopped and now they're heading for like C's and B's. So I told
229 him to stop and he's stopped now. So I'm happy .

230 *You're a sensible older brother then. Sorting him out.*

231 I'm happy. I've never skived in my life, I've only missed school now and then when I've
been ill and that. I'm heading for C's and D's

232 *Good*

233 And I'm hoping John will do the same.

234 *Do you have contact with any of your grandparents? Or anything like that.*

235 No

236 *Not with Dad?*

237 My Dad's dead

238 *Oh is he, I'm sorry. Did you know Dad?*

240 No, not really. He died when I was a baby.

4f

241 *And how does Margo think you are getting on at school now?*

242 Who?

243 Margo.

244 She thinks I'm getting on fine.

Phase 5

5a

245 *In the next section I'd like to ask you about your plans, dreams for the future.*
246 *Do you think about what might happen next year, what you'll be doing next*
247 *year?*

248 Hopefully next year I'll be taking my GCSEs and I would have left school this
249 time next year. Hopefully with a job, wait for my GCSE results to come back.

5b

250 *And the next question, what do you want to do when you leave school?*

251 Be a chef

252 *What qualifications do you need for that?*

253 C's, D's and NVQ's cos at school they were doing umm, French as umm,
254 missing some subject out at school for GCSE's as they didn't have the
255 teachers and they've got courses at the college which I go to and there's a
256 catering course which I go to an NVQ level 1, so if I pass that, I'll go to NVQ
257 level 2

258 *Right*

5b

259 *So that's what you do immediately after you leave school?*

260 Yes. Get some good grades first.

5c

261 *And where do you see yourself Bobby, say when you are 25*

262 Living in my own home, with a job being a chef hopefully, um hopefully
263 with a girlfriend.

5d

264 *I'm going to ask you Bobby where some other people, if I asked them the*
265 *same question where they might think you'll be, o.k. One of your teachers,*
266 *one you are close to, where do you think they might see you when you in 20*
267 *years time?*

268 Hopefully , same as me

269 *and Jane?*

270 She says she hopes I do the same

271 *How about Margo?*

272 She thinks the same, I think

273 *What about your Mum, what do you think she might say?*

274 She doesn't know much about my school and that

275 *How about your brother?*

276 Um, he hasn't said much about it

277 *Is there any other interested adult who might have a view? Anyone else who's*
278 *important to you?*

279 No, not really

280 *We're now just about at the end of questions. I know that you've had lots of*
281 *changes in your life, some people would find that really hard to cope with,*
282 *how would you say that you've coped?*

283 Very well

284 *Is there anything you can think of that's helped you?*

285 Social workers

286 *What is about the social workers that was helpful?*

287 Well when I (went to term say) I've never had any complaints about them
 288 here, but say I did, I'd ring them, ask them if I could meet them and they'd say
 289 yes.

290 *So they're easy to get hold of? Has that happened to you in the past?*

291 No but they have helped me out with quite big situations, they've helped me
 292 out now cos my real Dad dead, they're helping me find his grave so I can go
 293 and see that.

294 *Anything else that's particularly helped?*

295 Finding me a place to stay, like here

296 *So here has helped*

297 Yeah

298 *And has there been anything that you can think of Bobby which hasn't helped?*
 299 *Which has made things harder?*

300 No, not really

301 *No? O.k. that's all Bobby apart from is there anything you'd like to ask me. Is*
 302 *there anything that we haven't talked about today that you thought I might*
 303 *ask?*

304 No, not really, cos I didn't know what you were here to ask me.

305 *That's what Jo said. But thinking now is there anything you think oh she didn't*
 306 *ask me about that.*

307 No not really.

308 *That's great*

Interview with Len

2a

1 *Can you tell me about the people you have lived with in your life, starting with*
2 *your birth family?*

3 I lived with my birth family, my first pair of foster parents, my second pair of
4 foster parents, my Nanna, my third pair of foster parents

5 *That's birth family, first pair, second pair, Nanna third pair*

6 Then my adoptive parents and where I am at the moment

7 *And that's CV isn't it. How old were you when you stopped living*
8 *with your birth family?*

9 Five

10 *And have you got brothers and sisters Len?*

11 Yes

12 *Can you tell me who they are?*

13 My brother's J – he's 9 I think, 8 - and my sister's 10 and she's N

14 *Right, so you've got a brother and sister. And where do they live now?*

15 My brother lives with my adoptive parents

16 *Oh right, so you're together*

17 No, we were. My sister lives somewhere in D and C

18 *And do you see both of them?*

19 I see my brother more than I see my sister

20 *And do you see your birth parents at all? Do you have contact with them?*

21 No, I'm only allowed letter box contact

22 *How long were you with all your different foster parents and your Nanna?*

23 *Was it very quick or were you with any of them for a longer period?*

24 I was with foster parents for 4 years

25 *Was that your first foster parents?*

26 No, that was my third. Those were the Hs..

27 *When did you live with your adopted parents?*

28 I lived with my adoptive parents umm a year and a half ago.

29 *And how long have you been at CV?*

30 A year and half

31 *Right. So when you were you actually adopted Len?*

32 I was adopted three years ago.

2b

33 *O.k. and what about schools Len?*

34 I've been to a schools in N, another school in N, a school in
35 G a school in..

36 *Here in W*

37 Umm, and I went to nursery quite long ago, in N

38 *Right, so you went to nursery and school and then school in N, then*
39 *another school in N and why did you move then?*

40 Because I was just about to get adopted and then I got moved and we had to
41 wait about a year before we got adopted.

42 *And where were you living when you went to school in G?*

43 Umm

44 *Was that with your adopted parents? And then they moved back here to*
45 *W?*

46 Yes

47 *So you went to school, was that to the junior school or straight here?*

48 Straight here

49 *And that was JC. And you've been here since? So, was your adoptive*
50 *Dad in the Armed Forces or something?*

51 Yes

52 *Do you call them Mum and Dad? Just so I know.*

53 Yes

2c

54 *O.k. Len, the next question is about do you know why you went into care and*
55 *why you are in care now? Can we talk first about when you were very little,*
56 *from your birth family , why did you go into care then?*

57 My birth parents weren't suitable enough to look after me

58 *What does that mean Len?*

59 They were on drugs and the drinking and I had to actually look after them
60 instead of the other way round.

61 *Right, do you remember that time Len?*

62 Yes. I remember my mum drinking and sleeping. She was so drunk, umm.

63 *Right, that's fine. And then obviously you went to your first foster parents,*
64 *why did you move from them to your second? Do you know or is it just..*

65 We just moved

66 *And then second, let me get it right, second to Nanna wasn't it*

67 Yeah. I moved to my Nanna's cos when I went to my Nanna's cos I went
68 there for the contact, then my Nanna found all these marks on my back, of a

69 belt buckle and she said who did it. And after they'd been hitting me with a
70 belt buckle, obviously they had

71 *Was that the foster parents?*

72 Yes. So then I got moved to my Nanna

73 *And then why did you move from your Nanna to your third foster parents Len?*

74 I stayed at my Nan's for a two weeks and that was pushing it really. My
75 Nanna wasn't really meant to have me there but my social worker OK'd it.

76 *So it was a kind of temporary foster...*
77 *And how was it at your third foster parents?*

78 It was really good actually. I wish I could be there now.

79 *Where were they? Were they in N?*

80 Yes. I'm hoping to go and see them in a few weeks.

81 *So did you have foster brothers and sisters there?*

82 Yes, there was seven of us in total

83 *Gosh*

84 We're short of foster carers

85 *Yes, I realise that, but cor, they were busy foster parents. And what happened*
86 *then, you were obviously adopted Len? Why are you in care now. why don't*
87 *you live with your adopted parents?*

88 The adoption broke down because I didn't like it there and they didn't like it
89 with me being there so I went to the London post-centre, whatever it is

90 *The post-adoption centre*

91 Yeah – it helped us a lot. It uncovered that I was unhappy there and instead
92 of trying to cover it all up

93 *Do you know what it was that was making you unhappy there Len?*

94 Just the constant arguing and the constant unhappiness all in the family.

95 *Who was arguing?*

96 Me and my Mum usually, she didn't like me.

97 *And how is at CV now? How do you feel about being at C*
98 *V?*

99 Sometimes I can get on the edge, but it's got a bit better.

100 *What do you mean "on the edge"?*

101 Um, can get a bit upset in there, that's when I first went, but now if one person
102 leaves I'll be the person who's been the longest there, the most respected,
103 know what I mean. Cos at the moment I'm on the edge of being respected,
104 but the other, like, the other, the top person's getting the full respect and I'm
105 getting what's coming off the top person, other words, so I've got the leftovers
106 of respect out there.

107 *But it's o.k. there?*
108 Yes ,could you find out something for me?
109 *I might be able to Len, ask me. If I can't I'll find someone who can.*
110 O.k. Computers were meant to be at the home 3 months ago, but they
111 haven't come to the home. And I need a computer for my course work
112 *We'll come to that in a bit. We'll come back to that at the end.*

2d

113 *Right, some of this we have talked about before. So tell me when you were*
114 *living with your birth parents, how did they look after you?*

115 They didn't really, I looked after them as I said. I would usually get up, make
116 my breakfast, go to bed, no, go to school and then straight from school go
117 home, get some money, go to Tesco's, get shopping, take it home, try and
118 cook dinner which was always revolting then serve it to my mum, my dad
119 wasn't there for my Mum because he was in prison so that would be my daily
120 routine.

121 *And you were 5 did you say*
122 Yes

123 *So you didn't have a younger brother and sister at that stage? Or was your*
124 *sister just on the scene?*

125 Yes

126 *So you were looking after her as well were you or was Mum looking after her?*

127 I had to look after her really cos, I had to hear her milk and everything. When
128 my mum went into labour with my sister, she wasn't actually in the hospital,
129 she was in the middle of our garden so I sprinted next door, knocked on the
130 front door saying what was happening to my mum, they ran out and said oh
131 she's in labour phoned an ambulance then ran back out and gave her a
132 blanket.

133 *That must have been scary Len. What are your feelings thinking about that*
134 *time?*

135 Funny really. I just can't believe how a young person can look after a fully
136 grown adult.

2e

137 *O.k. lets go to the next one. Well this will be a bit tricky because you were*
138 *little. In what ways were your birth parents interested in your school work?*

139 Um, they were a bit interested. They were interested in colourful pictures,
140 interested in writing.

141 *Did they help you with school work?*
142 Um, no, not really, they were too drunk.

143 *Did you go and see Dad Len when he was in prison?*
144 Um, no, I wasn't allowed

PHASE 3

3a

145 *The next questions Len are about school. O.k. when did you learn to read,*
146 *can you remember?*

147 I learnt to read when I was 4

3b

148 *O.k. if you think about now, on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 is I'm not good at*
149 *reading or literacy at all and 10 is I'm an excellent reader, I'm brilliant at*
150 *literacy, where would you say you are now?*

151 3

152 *Why's that?*

153 Because when I read, I don't read, I read at this pace, dah, dah, dah and
154 every word goes at that pace.

3c

155 *O.k. Tell me about school, how do you feel about school?*

156 School's o.k. There was a bit of a bullying issue that's been around for quite a
157 long time but I'm getting used to it now, everything is getting cracked down on
158 by Ms Brown. She helps me sort things out with other pupils.

159 *Tell me about the bullying in school*

160 The bullying issue is just people who think they are better than me

161 *What kind of things have been happening?*

162 They come up to me and call me names, sometimes violence is an issue.
163 That's it really.

164 *And what do you enjoy in school?*

165 I enjoy. Some of my lessons, IT, food teach and the option that we get, an
166 NVQ, as part of my options we can choose an NVQ now. It's only just
167 happened in the last year, so hopefully I'm going in this year

168 *Is there anything that you don't enjoy in school?*

169 Um, bullying

170 *Do you feel Len you are the only one who is bullied or are there lots of*
171 *different people?*

172 know I'm not the only one but there is quite a lot of people that get bullied.

3d

173 *And what are you good at at school?*

174 Um, IT, cooking, since I have been doing it since I was 5, um, running, high
175 jump – P.E., English and maths. I think I'm really good at science too. A
176 whole variety of things.

177 *Do you take part in any clubs or anything like that?*

178 I take part now in an after school club. It's like a running club. I'm achieving a
179 substantial amount of metres at the moment, I can run can run about 600, no
180 6,000, 7,000 metres I can go without stopping. I couldn't have done that
181 without the PE teachers.

182 *No. Do you go in for competitions for the school, or anything like that?*

183 Not yet

3e

184 *And does anyone help you at school Len? In what way do they help you?*

185 Um, yes, I get quite a lot of help from Ms B with the bullying issue, I get
186 helped by the IL department, that's individual learning, it's a programme set
187 up by the school, to kind of support pupils in school who have learning
188 disabilities and they know I don't have any learning disabilities at all but they
189 know I find some things quite hard so they help me.

190 *Which things do you find hard Len? Which things do they help you with?*

191 I remember asking if I could go up for a Maths tests cos I had my SATS
192 maths and I found the really test hard, no the first test really hard, sorry and
193 the second test wasn't as hard but I had to use a calculator which I didn't
194 have, but the IL department, I did have a word with someone in the IL
195 department and they didn't give me any help but they boosted up my
196 confidence by saying "Oh Len you'll be able to do it".

197 *Confidence-boosting. Anybody else?*

198 No

3f

199 *Len, do you feel your school and carers, and I suppose by that we mean*
200 *CV, do they talk a lot?*

201 Yes, um my key worker which is L, a man called L, he's Spanish,
202 makes sure I have a talk with him once a week and here with the school Ms
203 B, whenever I see Ms B always asks me how things are going,
204 what sort of things I've done that day.

205 *Has L talked to Ms B would you say?*

206 No, I talk to Ms B and L. Sometimes school and home do have
207 contact if it's like a play that's going on, a holiday or something, they'll always
208 sort out with the school to make sure I've actually told the truth. Cos if I say
209 'm going to Florida with the school when I was actually going with my friends
210 then they'd have to phone up the school and find out and then I'd go with the
211 school if they were going, but if I wasn't going with the school, I'd get told off.

212 *Who comes to Parents Evenings?*

213 Um, either my adoptive mum and dad or someone from the Home or both.

214 *And your adoptive mum and dad and the Home do they talk, do you know?*

215 Yes my mum. There's a monthly summary which is a really good idea cos if
216 I've actually been praised this weekend for how good my summary was.

3g

217 *And Len what do you think about other pupils knowing that you are in care?*

218 Umm, I don't mind

219 *Do the other pupils in your class know that you are in care?*

220 Yeah

221 *And do you think they treat you differently because you are in care?*

222 Yeah

223 *Can you tell me about that?*

224 Some people are really horrible to me because I'm in care so I get a bit upset

226 *How are they horrible to you?*

227 They are horrible to me by "Oh Len, Oh you've got no parents, so and so and
228 so and so"

229 *What about the others?*

230 Um, other people just treat me differently, by saying "Oh Len, come and play
231 with us. Sometimes they try and comfort me"

232 *And has it always been like that or has it ever been different in the past?*

233 Um, when I first came it was really different because no one knew, but you tell
234 one person and then the whole class knows.

235 *Is that what happened*

236 Yes

237 *How do you think school might have been different for you if no-one had
238 known?*

239 School was different because people would have just treated me better and
240 no-one would have the saying to get back at me.

241 *What about the teachers do they treat you differently?*

242 Um, no, sometimes they do, cos if they see me upset they'll send me straight
243 out and they say "oh Len, go and get a bit of air, you look upset" and I go out,
244 have a bit of air really.

245 *What you say, it sounds as they treat you differently but in a positive way, in a
246 helpful way.*

3h

247 *And tell me about your friendships, have you got lots of friends?*

248 Um, I've got a few, one doesn't go to school anymore but I'm still in contact
249 with him because he lives in C now. His name is Karl.

250 *It's good that you kept in touch. How about the others*

251 Some people that are in this school, they arrange activities with me like going
252 to Alton Towers on Sunday and going to Disneyland, Florida. Haven't been
253 yet, but they've organised it, which is quite positive.

254 *And do any of them ever come to CV, do you go to their houses?*

255 Um, Karl's come once to CV and I've been to his house. No-one
256 else has though. Oh yeah Katy

257 *Is she from school?*

258 She's come once as well

- 259 *And what do you like to do with your friends Len?*
- 260 Um, I like going out on activities with them, like going to the cinema, quasar,
 261 paintballing, holidays (Disneyland Florida, Paris) – and if we ever have a
 262 spare ticket I always say can my friend come invited and they always say no.

PHASE 4

4a

- 263 *And these next questions are about CV .Where do you do your*
 264 *homework?*

- 265 In my room or at school, but sometimes I don't even do it.
- 266 *Is your room somewhere that's its sensible to do homework?*
- 267 Yes, its just above the kitchen.
- 268 *Is there a table?*
- 269 Yes, I've got two desks. It's just above the kitchen.
- 270 *Do you share your room with anyone Len?*
- 271 No, I've got a massive double bed, all to myself.

4b

- 272 *Can someone at the Home help you with school work?*

- 273 Um, yes, L.
- 273 *And does Lesley help you.*
- 274 Yes she does

- 275 *In what ways does she help you?*

- 276 She points out things to me and says, "Oh Len, A better way of doing this is
 277 like this"

4c

- 278 *And what else do you have at home Len to help you with school work? Are*
 279 *there lots of books you can use? Is there a computer*

- 280 There is a computer but it's kept in, do you know the middle office? It's kept
 281 in there and we're not allowed to use it. We're only allowed to use it if its
 282 urgent. We do not have internet facilities. Marian won't let us use it. They
 283 always say "go down to the library".

- 284 *Do you have a library ticket?*

- 285 Um, I don't but the Unit does.

- 286 *Are there books that you can use at the Home?*

- 287 Some, like one or two

- 288 *So, not many*

4d

- 289 *And who asks you at CV about school and how about you are*
 290 *getting on?*

- 291 Um, everyone

292 *That's good. What kind of things do they ask you about?*

293 Homework, if I ever have any, school work, what grades I got in my school
294 work, homework

4e

295 *Len, I'm going to separate this question into two bits. Does anyone from your*
296 *birth family ask, the contact that you have, do they ask you about school and*
297 *how you are getting on?*

298 Yes

299 *Who's that mum and dad?*

300 Mum, Dad's still in prison.

301 *Do you have contact with any of the rest of your birth family, aunts and uncles*
302 *or grandparents? Letterbox?*

303 Wish I could but I'm not allowed

304 *And how about your adoptive parents?*

305 I see them once a month.

306 *Do they ask you about how school is going, how you are getting on?*

307 Yes, my adoptive Dad used to say "Oh Len, if you don't do your homework
308 right I'll rip it up and make you do it again. He would, believe me."

309 *So they thought school work was important by the sound of it.*

310 They thought my writing was scruffy. Then they'd make me try my hardest
311 and write in neat and one piece I tried 50 attempts of getting school work and
312 my Dad ripped 49 of them up.

4f

313 *How does your social worker think you're getting on at school?*

314 To Jackie, I'm getting on.. really well

PHASE 5

5a

315 *The next bit Len, I'm going to ask you about your plans, your dreams for the*
316 *future. Do you think about what might happen next year?*

317 Yes, I think next year I'm hopefully getting qualifications I need. A year early,
318 hopefully.

319 *High expectations. OK.*

5b

320 *And what do you want to do when you leave school?*

321 I'll be a Hotel manager or a chef, or a hairdresser or a barber.

322 *They're very different things Len. What's helped you come to think about*
323 *those different things Len?*

324 I work in a barbers now, £350 a day is really good, I would think

325 *Is that what you get?*

326 No not me, what they get. I get £25 a week. Not good.

327 *What about the Hotel Manager bit and the chef?*

328 Well, the hotel manager, I looked up on Kudos, it's like a careers thing and
329 you have to look on it for all the qualifications that I need to get and so far I'm
330 half way through getting the qualifications. All I need is an NVQ level 1, a
331 cooking, a food technology grade, A, B or C and hopefully do business
332 studies. I'm not doing business studies but I can go to college afterwards.

333 *And what is it about the actual job that interests you?*

334 The job interests me...

335 *Have you done work experience, do you know what it's about?*

336 Yes, its about going around a hotel pointing out what's wrong, helping other
337 people, paying wages, filing forms and trying to get ?sums? really.

5c

338 *And where do you see yourself Len when you are say 25 years old?*

339 In London in one of the top hotels, manager with a clip board, spending a lot of
340 money and earning about £450, 000 a week - not a year sorry – a week, I'd
341 be a millionaire

342 *Yes, you would be!*

5d

343 *OK. I'm going to speak up a bit because of all the people moving around. I'm*
344 *going to ask you about where you think lots of different people might think*
345 *you'll be when you're older. Where do you think Ms B would see you*
346 *when you are say 30, 35.*

347 Um, I don't know.

348 *Any ideas what she might say?*

349 Um, I think she might say that I'll hopefully get a good grade and if I get for
350 he option of me being hotel manager or chef I think she's say hotel manager.

351 *And how about say L or L?*

352 Chef

353 *What about Jackie, where do think she'll say you'll be?*

354 Drama, she knows I love drama

355 *And what about, I'm going to split these up again, your birth mum? Any*
356 *thoughts?*

357 Um, I'll think for her. A superstar, a pop star because she knows I love
358 singing

359 *What about your adoptive mum?*

360 Um, drama, singing teacher

361 *And how about your Dads?*

362 Um

- 363 *How about your adoptive Dad?*
- 364 A singing teacher or an artist
- 365 *And what about J and N, your brother and sister, what do you they*
366 *might say?*
- 367 J will probably say a singer and N will probably say a singer
- 368 *There's a wide range there of different things, but everybody is seeing you*
369 *doing something which is good. And what about any other adult in your life*
370 *who is interested? And who might have a view? Who might that be?*
- 371 The designated teacher.
- 372 *What do you think she'd say?*
- 373 She'd probably say I'll be a top actor in the West End.
- 374 *What about a, do you have a Gran or Grandad through your adoptive parents?*
- 375 Yeah, a Gran. She'd probably say a chef cos I do a lot of cooking with her.

PHASE 6

6a

- 376 *That's good. OK, Len I know that you've had lots of changes in your life and*
377 *some people would find that really hard and I'd like to ask you how do you*
378 *think that you have coped, being in care?*
- 379 I think I've coped really well. Not boasting or anything
- 380 *No, that's fine*
- 381 I think that if other people had had as many moves, they'd be very aggressive
382 and I don't feel that aggression at all really, so

6b

- 383 *What do you think has helped you Len?*
- 384 The thing that's helped me is just a thing that my social worker said to me
385 hat's it's not my fault that I'm in care and its true as well.
- 386 *Anything else that's helped?*

6c

- 387 *And has there been anything which really hasn't helped?*
- 388 Um, not having contact with my parents, having face to face
- 389 *Did you have contact with them while you were in foster care or when you*
390 *were adopted?*
391 Um,
- 392 *Was there any difference for you have you ever had any behaviour problems*
393 *n school like when you were younger?*
394 *[shouting in the background]*
- 395 That's our Head of Year. She's scary
- 396 OK
- 397 She is scary.

398 *I don't know her.*

399 I got told off by her in my first year.

400 *Do you get told off very often?*

401 I'm a good little boy

402 *I know something else I was going to ask you. Are most of your friends in*
403 *care or not in care?*

404 Karl is in care, believe it or not. Me and him have been friends for 3 and a half
405 years

406 *Good*

407 I'm wondering why I was friends with him in the first place!

408 *It's often the way. Would you say some of your friends are not in care?*

409 Some people. My bestest friends are in care

410 *How about Katy?*

411 Katy isn't. But at the moment she isn't speaking to me because other people
412 like bullies are changing her they don't want her to be my friend anymore.

413 OK

Interview with Michelle

2a

1 *Can you tell me about the people you have lived with, starting with your birth*
2 *family?*

3 OK. I lived with my mum T, my stepdad T, and my four sisters,
4 D, N, C and J

5 *How long were you all living together?*

6 C left home when I was 9 years old, she went into care she was 14 and
7 I left home at 15 and I went to live with an, well it turned out to be an abusive
8 family

9 *Were they foster carers?*

10 No, it was my friend, she was like my best friend since I was young and what
11 happened was her brother abused and raped me cos my mother didn't want
12 me at home no more cos my older sister, N had moved back home, and
13 me and N we didn't get on.

14 *Right. N moved back, you two didn't get on.*

15 No cos she went to the fair and my parents always forgave her for everything,
16 I would do the slightest thing wrong and, I got abused a lot when I was at
17 home, emotionally and physically, my sister suffered a little bit of physical
18 abuse but it was minor compared to what me and C suffered from.
19 N moved to the fair and she was sick and tired of being at home and she
20 went to the fair and she came back after 4-5 months being there

21 *You mean the travelling fair?*

22 Yes, she went to H Fair, see and my parents the whole time they really
23 good with me but I didn't really get on with my mum, me and my mum never
24 got on, I've always wished for her to be my best friend, blah, blah blah and to
25 encourage me and seeing her do with my other sisters, C, but the
26 whole time she put me down, my mum has an eating disorder so she tried to
27 put one on me by calling me names like fat, stuff like that, you know, so
28 N came back from the fair and the whole time of this kind of good
29 atmosphere between me and my mum dropped completely cos N and
30 me never ever got on. See, I was closer to C, not N.

31 *How much older than you is N?*

32 N is 18 months older than me, she always likes to say I'm 18 months
33 older than you but she acts more younger than me, when I look at it now.

34 *So you moved in to this other family which was your best friends family, tell*
35 *me what happened then.*

36 What happened was I loved it for the first two weeks, it was heaven, see I
37 tend to smoke now because of them, I'm not going to say because of them,
38 but it was more encouraging. I was drinking and at home I was only allowed
39 say a glass of shandy with my dad, like on a Sunday or something or if he
40 was watching football on a Friday or Saturday. It was great fun, I was staying
41 up to whatever time I wanted, the routine at home was 9.30, you know, get up
42 for school and stuff like that so it was..I was

43 *How old were you again?*

44 15. I was being treated like an adult, I loved that, because I've never had

that before. I got treated like a baby at home, you know, I was...cos my mum always said the younger three and C and N were the older ones, with me, D and J being the younger ones, it was if I was being treated like a kid all the time.

You know, I could eat when I wanted, I could eat junk food, you know, great, then two weeks after them two weeks, I was in Anthony's bedroom, he was my best friend's brother and me and him got on very well in that period of time cos I obviously as a child used to go round there, he used to take me and Tina to the shops, buy sweets for us, that sort of thing, so I saw him more like a brother figure kind of thing and I used to say how jealous I was of Tina as she had a big brother, I never had one so I was quite jealous of that, you know, brothers stick up for you and that sort of thing and they seemed to have a great atmosphere going on between themselves as well, you know. Tina looked up to her brother and Anthony always looked after her basically so one night me Tina, Anthony and Anthony's brother Jim, Bill and Bob Smith was sitting in Anthony's bedroom, we were all having a laugh, all drinking loads of alcohol as you do, smoking. For the first time I'd smoked a bit of a split, the usual teenage "I'm so big and cool -kind of thing" and cos I was so used to having the routine of going to sleep quite early, I was still, even though it sounds late, I was going to bed about 1.00 a.m. and falling asleep which was very late for me but early to them. I woke up and umm...the room was completely dark, it was pitch black and I felt really painful, really really painful down like there you know and I looked up and I completely froze because I saw Anthony on top of me and he was having intercourse with me, you know me unwillingly, I didn't know what to do because I was confused, yeah, and even when you try and scream, it was if I couldn't scream at all, my whole body felt as if I couldn't move so I didn't struggle or anything and when he finished he like tried to talk to me but I was so confused, you know when it goes in one ear and out the others kind of thing, and I just wanted to get out of the room to be honest with you, I was shocked but I also felt embarrassed that he had seen me in that light, you know and I've never, that's never happened to me before, even when I was at home my dad would only kiss me on the forehead, it was never a huggy type of thing or anything so all I remember him actually saying was you know I'm not after one night stands so, I was very confused by this and said o.k. I asked to go to the toilet and he said fine, as I went downstairs I was in the bathroom cos their bathroom was down the stairs and I noticed that I was bleeding, now I hadn't even had a period before so this even confused me even more so, I didn't understand what was going on and umm, I thought oh God I must have come on my period which made me even more embarrassed but also a bit excited cos it was "I'm a woman" and all that kind of stuff, but, I felt very very painful, sore, it was quite horrible. I went, cos he told me to go straight back into his room, but what I did was when I went back upstairs, I went straight into Tina's room who was my friend, I tried to wake her up to tell what had happened but she obviously didn't wake up as it was half five, six in the morning, you know. When she finally woke up about 10, cos I just pretended to be asleep the whole time, every time he looked at me I was shaking, scared, I woke her up when she got up at 10 and I told her everything and she threatened me and told me not to hurt her brother, so this was even more, it was like this was my friend what's going on here so you know, I didn't understand what had happened and I was asking her for her to kind of be there and explain cos I had been put in cotton wool my whole life, I stayed in my room all the time, I'd never gone out or anything. My parents never spoke about sex or that sort of thing, kept us very enclosed, it was quite difficult so I didn't understand I was terrified of the family after that, cos I felt I had no one, I couldn't go home cos my mum wouldn't have me home and I was terrified of home anyway. I couldn't tell my school because my school had let me down so many times, I've been, I've gone to my school and complained about my parents, the way they were treating me at home and they never listened and even though there was background of my two older sisters actually going to ask for help and my eldest being in care, I never got listened to so I didn't know who to turn to. As time went on, he got more and more violent, he would not allow me to go to school so I missed a long period

108 of school, I mean I missed all my coursework so I couldn't do anything, I got
109 beaten up for the slightest things, you know, it was really horrible and he'd
110 constantly like, I was self-harming very badly there and he'd actually slit my
111 wrists for me, it was kind of like, you know, its what you go through. Its made
112 me stronger now, but in that time I got very ill and I thought that I had food
113 poisoning. I'd gone down so many clothes sizes. When I first gone there I was
114 like 14-16 and when I left I was size 8 so I'd gone down a lot and I was
115 throwing up constantly and I felt so ill and even when there was nothing to
116 throw up, it was bile it was really really horrible and I begged to get me a
117 doctor but he never let me out, constantly kept me in the room and that sort of
118 thing, and I begged and begged, cos I tell you why, what happened was, and
119 this is how I know this, it must have been, it came to Christmas and
120 Christmas eve, me and my sisters used to make a wish and my wish was to
121 be back home with my family, that's all I wanted, I didn't care about what had
122 happened at home, all I wanted was that, cos I realised for once that
123 Christmas wasn't presents and food and that sort of thing, Christmas was
124 people you actually and you knew that loved you, even though they didn't
125 show it all the time but as I woke up next day that wasn't my wish, my wish
126 had not happened and, umm, I remember crying my eyes out, crying, I fell
127 back to sleep, I woke up and he tried to force me to have sex with him, I
128 completely refused and I remember him hitting me across the face a few
129 times and then force sex on me. And then this when it happened a couple of
130 days later I was throwing up all the time, it was very horrible for me. He said
131 I wasn't looking after myself, beat me up thinking I wasn't looking after myself,
132 you know, he was not all there basically, you know every time I begged for a
133 doctor, he refused, he would not let me see anyone. My little sister came
134 round to see me on like Boxing Day and I told my sister, I said to my sister I
135 think I'm pregnant. I had that feeling, I'd never felt before where, I was
136 constantly ill, at first I mean I thought I can't be pregnant because you get
137 morning sickness, but this was all day throughout, smells, I would open the
138 fridge, the smell would hit me from a mile away. I couldn't smoke, I couldn't
139 drink, even looking at him made me throw up, you know, it was all that sort of
140 thing. My sister, who was 14, was 13, 14 now, D was very close to me
141 throwing up she like helped and stuff but mum found out and wouldn't let her
142 come and see me again. So in that time it was really horrible and I had no
143 choice, I mean I had a feeling, I wasn't 100% sure I was pregnant, but I had
144 that feeling and I remember saying to him, he was terrified that the police
145 would come he said. So I said I'd got a letter from the school and it said if I
146 didn't go in cos he'd not allowed me to go to school for so many months, but if
147 I didn't go into school, then they would send the police round. So that was the
148 only way I could get out. So it was about 12:30 and he said fine, be back at
150 about 3:30 dead on. Basically I went into my school, I went to see Mr H
151 and he was the new Head of Year, but I'd seen him beforehand and I
152 explained the whole story to him and that day they had social services come
153 see me, I had the police, everything.

154 I went into a foster home that night, a woman called LD I went to
155 live with and next day she got me a pregnancy test and I found out I was
156 pregnant. So I had to have, no, I got forced into an abortion, my school
157 wanted to look good, bear in mind I've told you already my school never did
158 anything, I had no faith in my school who never helped me, they thought I was
159 the bad one because of the way I was acting in school, they didn't know how
160 it was going on ain the home and so they wanted to look good in front of
161 Social Services in front of all these important people who like review me and
162 sometimes I would have it at school, so you know, all these important people,

163 my school made sure they looked good and they told me that I couldn't have
164 my baby, that I would hate my baby and I might abuse it because of what the
165 father did to me. Now I'm harmless, I will tell you how it is, but when it comes
166 to abusing and stuff like that, I can't even bring myself to do it. So I got really
167 hurt about this so, even my foster mum told me not to have the baby, she said
168 I was too young, this, that and the other, but all I wanted was to have that
169 baby, that was what I wanted you know, to have the baby because it was

170 innocent you know and I knew that I could cope cos I'd coped through that,
171 you know what I mean. So, instead though, it came to February 1st, it was a
172 Friday, it was only last year, I had my termination, I was 10 weeks pregnant,
173 but I say it was a girl because I had it in my heart that it was a girl as I wanted
174 a girl so badly and I said no it will be a girl and I lit a candle in the Church in
175 the August when she would have been born and its going to be August so I'll
176 go back, with like a Teddy Bear or something cos it will be her birthday so,
177 that's important to me to celebrate that because she's still an innocent child
178 basically. So that's how it all happened.

179 *So you were with a foster carer, then what happened?*

180 Oh god, she was only like a short term parent so I went to live with a woman
181 called VM bearing in mind in this time of living with L, I
182 felt she made me feel better about myself in this first time I lived with her and I
183 did ironing job for her to earn a bit of extra money so I earned £50 with both
184 my pocket money on top. I also liked to keep myself going so I did a lot for
185 her and she did a lot for me. She was brilliant at first, I really did like her and
186 then I went to live with VM and I did not like her from the start.
187 She was cruel, I had an eating disorder so she would give me different food, I
188 made a complaint against her VM and the reason for her giving
189 me different food and lesser portions was because she knew I would throw it
190 up. See is that, you know, OK kind of thing, so I hated it. She was really cruel,
191 she said I was jealous of her daughter because her daughter had a mother
192 and her mother loved her and if ever anyone spoke about my mum that would
193 hurt a lot so she was throwing it in my face all the time. I mean, yes I did get
194 a bit jealous every now and again, you know, you see how they act and you
195 long for that and I always have longed for a mother and basically she was
196 very nasty to me, completely nasty. I went into my school and I said I refuse
197 to go back there after six weeks, I was meant to be there for 2 years, I
198 completely refused to go back and I went to live back at L's. That's
199 when things went wrong. See, at first they were o.k. but I had changed a lot,
200 I had not been this person that would say o.k., I was doing it my way and that
201 was the only thing, at V's house, she had taught me to do it on my own,
202 you know, not to listen and just because other people say this is what I think
203 you should, doesn't mean you have to do that. So eventually what happened
204 was I went back to L's and we didn't get on. The first week it was
205 brilliant, then she realised I'd changed, she realised, I was going a bit
206 downhill, anyway I was quite low, I was getting a bit, speaking my mind really,
207 I was going out with an older guy, he was a lot older than me, he was 36, I
208 was, just over 16 that time, umm... so she wasn't very happy about that and I
209 was mad in love over this guy. But the whole time I never slept with him,
210 that's one thing I wouldn't have done you know and I am glad to say that I
211 didn't because the whole time he was using me, he was waiting for me to
212 sleep with him, he saw me as a young vulnerable girl and he thought he could
213 get his wicked way and that wasn't going to happen. I have been brought up
214 with standards at the end of the day and I know just because you're going out
215 with a guy, it doesn't mean you have to jump into bed with him. Basically
216 L didn't like the fact, she thought I was sleeping with this guy, you
217 know constantly she thought that, you know basically, I was doing this that
218 and the other, but because I had gone through the phase of I want to get
219 myself pregnant again beforehand, before I was going out with that Gary, I
220 had slept with these other numerous guys to try and get myself because I
221 hated myself for, I felt like I had killed my own child and she thought I was
222 sleeping with this guy to get myself pregnant because of my past. Basically
223 Gary tried to, well, he broke it off and me and Lorraine were not in the best of
224 moods with one another or anyway and I hated it, I hated the fact that he
225 stood me up that day and I wanted to get back at him really really badly and
226 cos I didn't sleep with him, I knew that really got on his nerves, but I knew that
227 if I slept with someone else, I made it clear to him that I had slept with
228 someone else that would really get at him, see I wanted to get revenge, that
229 his guy had hurt me so much, he had to come into my life and said all this
230 stuff and I found it was only because I wouldn't sleep with him so I ended up

231 sleeping with L's foster son's friend.

232 So basically I told Gary the next day I felt so guilty, I phoned him up and I was
233 working and I realised, oh God I've cheated on him, you know what I mean.
234 He told my foster mum and L she was a bitch to me already, she's
235 pushed me about, she was nasty, everything. I was afraid of her like I was
236 afraid of my mother. And it was July 29th and I said to my counsellor and I had
237 a different Personal Adviser, don't make me go home, I refuse to go home, I
238 said look, I feel unhappy, I was unhappy anyway, even weeks of cutting
239 myself, drastically, really badly cutting myself I mean, banging, if I couldn't get
240 something sharp I'd bang my wrists against things and I refused, I said, don't
241 make me go back home and then what happened was my personal adviser,
242 J, went to pick up my medication cos he thought they would find me, cos
243 I begged them enough and I said cos I can't not have my medication, see I
244 was on cipramil, antidepressants. So they made me go back home and along
245 with that I took my antidepressants home with me. I ended up taking an
246 overdose with these antidepressants because that August would have been
247 the day, you know, it's a terrible time for me and I tried to commit suicide and
248 they put me in a young persons unit, hospital thing to try and help me. I was
249 in L.

250 *Did it help?*

251 Oh God no, well at first it did, Social Services they paid for private, so I was
252 put into a private hospital at first so it was unfair to move me to a good
253 hospital and then to T, which was a completely different hospital, which
254 doesn't observe you, which doesn't give you what you need to get you
255 through things and I found it disgusting from being in a brilliant hospital where
256 was certainly looking at my problems and actually facing them to saying I'm
257 K in Tyndall and people actually believing me. So... Soon after, I went
258 straight into 1A, didn't like it at first, hated it, I just didn't want to be there,
259 always stayed out, always went out, always, dunno, you name I'd do it to stay
260 away from there.
261 Even if my friends were like working or whatever, I would make sure I was not
262 there you know because what wound me up as well cos I was expected as
263 soon as I came out of hospital I was made to go back to Haydn training. I
264 found that very unfair, I had no time to recover for myself you know to start
265 being me again, start being a person instead I was forced back into the
266 whole, got a work routine, got to do this, got to do that, I was only a kid. D'you
267 know what I mean

268 *How old were you then?*

269 16. Just a kid.

270 *You've got a lot going on haven't you?*

271 Yeah, sure have

272 *So how long were you in 1A before you came here?*

273 Nearly eleven months

274 *Did that settle down for you?*

275 Yeah, it did. I ended up really really liking it, I got on very well with the staff.
276 here were some people that came, I don't like it. I'm fine if you've been there
277 from the beginning but if you've just come in to my life, I will give you a hard
278 time. To see if you're going to stick by me through that and two people that
279 started left because of the hard time I was giving them and because I was the
280 eldest in the children's home, the kids looked up to me and did exactly the
281 same, because I was so used to. I wanted to test people. I was a bit, you
282 know, I know now that you shouldn't do that to people, it was my way of

283 seeing if I could trust them or not.

284 *Well, I think that's quite normal in many ways. Well, as I say you've packed a*
 285 *lot into the last few years haven't you Michelle.*

286 Definitely, it's been worth it, it's worked out. I mean look at my place, it's
 287 beautiful. I mean I know what I want to do, I've just taken my....

288 *I'll come on to that later*

289 Oh

290 *No talk now, if you want to*

291 But I know that, but I mean my place is me. It's got all my..., see I was
 292 brought up with creams and golds and stuff like that and I refuse to be like my
 293 mother, even if I like something, that's got a cherub I refuse to buy it because
 294 my mother was into all that sort of stuff and so I decided that I'm a very very
 295 bubbly person. So, pinks and purples so if I'm in a sad mood, it'll brighten
 296 myself up kind of thing. I love colour, I'm not being funny but things like
 297 beiges and creams and stuff make me feel cold and I felt frightened a lot in
 298 that house. I like to have so it brings warmth in you know, you feel more calm
 299 and...

300 *We all have colours for that don't we*

301 So that's when I got this place I was overwhelmed, I was like wow but I tell
 302 you one thing, its not all worked out to what its meant to be so you think you
 303 get your own place, you think you're o.k., you think you can do your own thing
 304 but ever you want to smoke as many cigarettes as you want, eat what you
 305 want, eat when you want, do all of that, then when it comes to you're getting a
 306 certain amount a week, then you've got to buy washing powder and you've
 307 got to buy soaps, you've got to buy washing up liquid, food, toilet rolls, even
 308 the slightest things like you wouldn't think of buying, you've got to buy and
 309 you've got no money for yourself. That's all part of growing up, I've realised
 310 but I completely say that if I meet anyone who wants to move out of care to
 311 stay there as long as you can. Just put up with me because, save as much,
 312 I'm very proud of myself, I don't get a lot a week but by tomorrow I'll have
 313 saved £120 that Rose looks after for me and that's since a month of being
 314 here. Now if I save more and more, I can buy, at Christmas time, you want
 315 to still buy people you care about presents, and if I want to go out, say,
 316 someone's going to the cinema, and they've invited me, you know, and that
 317 sort of thing, I could say, o.k. I've got this money, I'll take such and such out
 318 of it but I'll put it back next week, do you know what I mean and that way I'm
 319 saving and building up instead of spending it all, like, like I'd like to.

320 *It sounds very sensible Michelle.*

321 Well, trust me I'd like to have thought Oh, I'd like to go clothes shopping
 322 today.

2b

323 *So, how about schools? Which schools have you been to?*

324 God there's so many. Right, I lived in D until I was around 7-8 so I went
 325 to schools there I can't remember exact names, but they were like younger
 326 schools so I've moved about to so many schools at that age, you never knew
 327 if you would stay friends with people or not.

328 *Why were you moving lots in D?*

329 My mum and dad. See the thing is we had to leave from D

330 straight away after one night. My mum is quite bad when it comes to certain
331 things, see, she'll move somewhere, but then she'll do something which
332 means that we can't stay there then. So it's quite difficult, you never know
333 how long you can stay somewhere cos of what she's going to do.
334 She'll do stupid things, like, I don't know, she'll do something wrong in her job
335 and this is illegal things so it was quite difficult, you know. We obviously us
336 kids were like all wow, first its like we're going to get a new house but when
337 you get settled. I remember one year me and D we were crying our
338 eyes out, it was just after Christmas and we had to leave D straight away
339 but the thing is I remember it was so heartbreaking, we've both got new
340 buggies for our dolls, we'd got loads and loads of presents but we had to
341 leave it all behind. I can remember sneaking one of my dolls with me you
342 know and taking it with me, me and D used to share it all the time it
343 broke our hearts and mum promised she's buy us some more toys and stuff
344 when we'd moved house. But when we moved to our new house, we had a
345 bedroom, it was so plain, there was nothing there and J well she didn't
346 understand, she was like under 2 or something like that, but me and D
347 it really hurt us. Do you know what we used to do for fun? My dad he used
348 to work as an AVS, a mechanic, got his own little business going so he used
349 to like let people know so that he's have fliers and stuff like that so he used to
350 let us lick the envelopes and stuff like that, that would be fun, that would be
351 like something to do because it was really hard, it was difficult so we had to
352 move to B.

353 *Right*

354 And we moved to B, L Avenue

355 *B in B?*

356 Yes and we lived there for quite a while, we went to P, it was a very good
357 school and lots of people say how good it is, but the school was stupid
358 because they believed my mother the whole time. My mum can put on this
359 sob act of "Oh, my life's been so difficult and my kids they don't listen to me."
360 You know what I mean. And we lived there and my sister C always took
361 us to school, walked us to school.
362 And me and D, well we could never tear us apart, we were always
363 together although there's 3 years between us, you wouldn't think, we were
364 like twins, we never ever left each other's side, you know, it was like that with 3
365 us and she's very advanced for her age as well and basically C used to
366 do everything in the house, and I mean everything, from little things to big
367 things and she would make sure we had eaten, she washed our clothes,
368 handwashed our school uniforms, actually handwashed because my mum
369 made her, even though we had a washing machine and stuff, my mum still
370 made her do that sort of stuff. She never had time to study or do her school
371 work or anything because she had to teach me to tell the time, she had teach
372 D to tie her shoelaces, she had to do all that, she had to look after our
373 baby, J, she had to do everything. N gave her crap all the time.

374 *What does mum do?*

375 My mum worked a window company, but in between times, my mum
376 basically used to send out babysitters and stuff like that for us. We had
377 childminders, mum was never around and when she was around, you knew
378 she was around, that kind of thing. My dad on the other hand, he was a very
379 hard working man, he wanted to bring food to us and stuff like that So he
380 worked hard and basically before like my mum could afford like childminders
381 and stuff like that, the only time my mum actually got them was just before
382 C left. She made C do everything, like, I mean it was terrible, she
383 had like to clean up all the time, when I was sick with gastroenteritis, I had
384 that and C had to clean it all up. You know, a young girl, she had to, if
385 my mum used to like, say if I done something wrong, my mum would starve
386 me for the day. My sister used to sneak food into my room, to like feed me
387 and stuff, she was a good sister to us, she was more like a mum, she used to

388 do our hair for school, she used to dress us everyday, give us our baths, she
389 was playing more of a mother role but at night she would be up to 11 o'clock
390 at night, 13, 14 year old girl because she had to do her homework. Basically
391 it was really horrible for her, so when she'd like be up to 11 o'clock doing her
392 homework and then she if she fell asleep, like nod off, a kid, working all day,
393 going to school having to do all that with us and still do homework so then
394 she'd fall asleep, she'd get a whack from my mum or something. The slightest
395 thing my sister would do, my mum would punch her in the nose and tell her
396 not to get blood on the carpet, sick things, you know, everything. I remember
397 my mum hit my sister for forging my mum's signature in our homework diary.
398 My sister couldn't do her homework she used to do it, like her friends used to
399 do it for her that sort of thing, you know what I mean. Instead of my mum
400 saying well I have seen that this, I haven't seen that, my sister used to forge
401 it. So my mum had this big red belt which was quite thick with a big buckle on
402 it, my mum hit her right across her face and cut her face with the buckle and I
403 remember that belt to this day cos we used to get whacked with a quite a lot.
404 It was horrible and I remember we used to try and sit on my sister, like say my
405 sister would be in a chair and my mum would say she was going to hit her
406 with the belt and me, D, J, and J was a baby, like a little
407 toddler walking around, would all try and protect our sister, cos we were
408 terrified for her. So like C, I remember we went to school one day I was
409 9 years old, and me and my sister, she was going to B Upper at the
410 time cos she's left Priory and I remember her taking us to school, kissing us
411 goodbye and that and telling us that she loved us, which was nothing new,
412 she'd done that every day, you know, saying "be good at school" and that
413 sort of thing that every Mum would do, she was more like, she as my sister,
414 but she never came back. She said she's see us that night, I remember, but
415 my Mum picked us up from school which was really odd because my sister
416 used to do it, and she had J in the car, and J would be at like
417 Nan and Grandad's house, she was only young, she didn't go to school, she
418 went to nursery in the mornings and I remember my mum taking us home and
419 my Nan's car was parked outside and my Mum said "what's she doing here",
420 because my mum didn't get on with my Nan and Grandad, my dad's family,
421 that's because they knew what she was like and I remember walking in the
422 house and my dad crying at the table cos we had like a garden table in our
423 kitchen because that was a time when money was not easy to find and stuff
424 like that and I remember my dad sitting there crying and my Nan was
425 comforting him and then we'd ask like what was going on but mum wouldn't
426 say, oh nothing he's just a bit upset and all the kids go running to dad when
427 he's crying, it happens doesn't it and my Nan said she was taking us to
428 Grandad's and Grandad would have some tea
429 We got all excited and we said why isn't; C coming and my mum said
430 she'd gone to her friends house for tea. So we went OK and we went out
431 with my Nan and Grandad and we stayed there till 9.00, we were very young,
432 bedtime was 7:00pm

433 *You must have wondered what was happening*

434 But we loved it because we got to stay up this late, it was a school night as
435 well so we got picked up by my mum and my dad which was really odd
436 because if we ever went to my Nan & Grandad's, my dad picked us up
437 because my mum never went to the house. Basically they drove us home in
438 silence, even though it was a 20 minute drive from my Nan and Grandad's,
439 they lived in Farnham Common, it felt like forever. J was asleep, me
440 and D were giggling, N was just sitting there.
441 And we pulled up outside our drive and I remember mum and dad saying that
442 they had something to tell us and my mum had gone to a little girl's home.
443 N was laughing at that point, loving every minute of it, I couldn't cry, I
444 didn't know what to do, I had to comfort my sister D who was crying
445 and then J was crying, because D was crying, cos J was
446 so young she didn't understand, she wanted to know why D was crying
447 so it made her cry cos D was upset so we weren't allowed to speak
448 about her again we never, we moved to B. My sister found out, by

449 phoning around, it was B where we were living so my Mum managed
450 to move away from her and not let her find out no more.

451 Soon after I started B secondary and I was so excited
452 Very excited. My sister had already been there two years, but I was dead, you
453 know, get to wear a blazer, get to wear a school tie, smart school uniform. I
454 thought it was so sophisticated, and my mum brought me my first bra so I felt
455 all grown up and things went completely not the way I expected.

456 Mum and dad had fallen out with N in the end. I only found out last year
457 that N went to our school and said she that she was getting abused at
458 home so basically, umm I loved English I always went to my English lesson.
459 My mum never believed how well I was doing, if I told her I've got this grade,
460 I've done this well, because I was in bottom group, because when I first went
461 to this school, Mrs D told my Mum I was dyslexic, my mum hated that
462 and she beat me up for it for being dyslexic, which hurt me in a big way. It
463 was like, I have a problem, you're not going to help me with it. It was very
464 hard. She never encouraged me to do homework, she never encouraged me
465 to read, she never encouraged me to do anything. When that happened, and
466 I first started to go to school, I wanted to prove my mum wrong so what I did
467 was I worked so hard. I never worked hard in my maths or my science, never,
468 hardly ever showed up, but I worked so hard with my English as well as the
469 fact I enjoyed my teacher, she was brilliant, she was always giving me the
470 benefit of the doubt and I went into my English and I worked so hard it came
471 up to the SATs. Now in Year 2 in Priory I got SATs grade and it was a 2 in
472 English and the average is level 3.

473 *Uhh, about a 2 actually.*

474 Oh right, my sister in Year 2, got 3s and 4s, she's younger than me, she's
475 very advanced and I got that thrown in my face a lot, so when my sister had
476 one her SATS and it was coming up to my SATs, you know, I had worked
477 very hard so it came up at Year 6 that I had done my SATS and I had only got
478 3, so when it came to Year 9 I wanted to really work hard and I got a level 6,
479 from a level 3 in Year 6 where my sister was getting 4s and 5s, which is
480 brilliant, I was getting Level 6 in my SATS, I got 3 in my science and a 4 in my
481 maths which wasn't brilliant

482 *Not too bad*

483 No, but I never tried to be honest. My mum thought that I'd forged my SATs
484 results which I had not She could not work out why I had a 3 and a 4 in these
485 subjects but a 3 in the other. She didn't understand that they were
486 completely different, maths and science are different from English, you've got
487 to use your imagination with English. With maths and science its like, whooh,
488 you know, working out things properly.

489 So umm, basically I went to live with my sister cos things went really bad, I
490 went to live in Dand I went to the social services whilst I was out there
491 cos I was going to PS School or something? It was a rough school. I
492 mean girls my age and younger were getting pregnant, it was shocking to me,
493 completely shocking so when I was living with my sister, I was going to this
494 school, I didn't like it, I started to hate my sister because my sister was still
495 seeing me as 9 and when I went to try and complain about my mum, my mum
496 soon got on the phone and gave her side of the story which was a complete
497 lie. My mum was very clever at saying "I'll cry my heart out and tell you all
498 kinds of things about my lie so you will believe me".

499 but even my school, B secondary, said they weren't going to let
500 me back because of that, because I told the truth. See that's why I don't like
501 my, you know my school I can deal with what they've done but I would, I
502 would never if I had children let them go to that school because of the way
503 they did that. No, the way they refused to let me back into school

504 *So you came back to B did you?*

505 Yeah I came back straight to B, my mum tried to get me back into
506 B Seccy. I was out of school for a month and a half. B Seccy
507 refused to take me back.

508 In the end because my mum got her way, because I refused to go to any
509 other school. Cos my dad said you can go to B Upper if you like, 'cos
510 that was the whole thing, see, when I was at my sisters, my dad phoned me
511 that night, when I first moved in and I was crying to him, cos I felt
512 homesick...And I only got on with my dad, to be honest with you, cos he was
513 the only person who kind of made me feel worth it. Even though I did get
514 called think from him sometimes and that and other things he never got to me
515 like my mum did. And I was crying to him and he said "do you want to come
516 back home?", cos he knew that I wanted to go to B Upper. The
517 reason that I wanted to go to that school was, cos when I left P, that it felt
518 so unfair that all my friends were going to the same school and I didn't know
519 no one at B Secondary. No one at all. I hadn't had a friend to my
520 name, it was very, very difficult to make friends cos everyone liked my sister
521 more than me.

522 But anyway, Um, it was really horrible cos, the only reason people liked me
523 was, cos, of my sister. If my sister told them to. And I hated that. When I
524 had had friends in P, that I could have stayed being friends with. So I said
525 "no, no". And, Um, cos I stayed there and it didn't work out, I came back
526 home, I was out of school, my Dad said, "Do you want to go to B
527 Upper?", but it was so late in the term and I had like a year and a bit left there
528 at B I didn't see a point in moving in the end. I thought, if I leave
529 now I've got to start all over again. Yeah, maybe not having to make friends,
530 because I had friends, but cos I hadn't seen them for a few years it wouldn't
531 be the same. You know, we've grown up.

532 So I thought better of it and my school let me back and I hated them all. And
533 I was a little cow and I didn't show up to lessons, I hid in the girls toilets all the
534 time with Tina. See this is, I started to fall in quickly with Tina.

535 Even though I'd known her, even though when we weren't at school, cos at
536 the streets and stuff at the park, um we used to skive lessons or used to go to
537 Wycombe instead of going to school. I used to meet her halfway, I'd be
538 dressed in my school uniform and then skive. We used to skive all the time.
539 Um, the only times I showed up was English or if it was a good day. I hated
540 going into the days when Miss H was going to be there because it would
541 be library day, and I hated library day, cos it was just research and boring and
542 yeah. Me and Miss H did not get on. So, basically things got really bad
543 and I got suspended. And that was due to, I was trying to make friends, in
544 the wrong way. And I thought, cos this girl kept on going on about she was a
545 drug addict, and me and Tina, thought it would be good to make friends,
546 get us some drugs and stuff like that. So we brought dish-washing powder
547 into the school, like crushed it up, put it into tin foil and we got found out and
548 we all got suspended for a week. And, Um, it wasn't brilliant. I just told my
549 mum what was going on. But my mum, kind of, went mad about it but she
550 didn't go off the wall. She just went into school, sorted it out and explained
551 what was going on and stuff, cos my mum didn't want me to be taken out.

552 My Mum wanted it to look good that I was going to a school and stuff. So, my
553 school did like, kind of shortened my suspension to less than what the other
554 girls had. And my mum just said that I was vulnerable and easy to be led
555 astray and stuff. And it was only to make her, see they weren't to help me, it
556 was to help her. Do you know what I mean? And, Um, basically, I stayed
557 there and I hated every minute of it. I didn't have to pretend to be brilliant, but
558 I didn't like my teachers. I wasn't happy at school, I lost so many friends.
559 The only friend that I could rely on was Tina. Obviously now, its not the

560 case. I mean...

561 *At the time?*

562 Yeah. She was the only person I trusted, she's the only person who took me
563 for who I was.

564 *So did you do your GCSE's?*

565 took five of them and failed them all. Well, they say "oh its not a fail mark
566 Michelle" but... I'd missed all my coursework due to Anthony S and I worked
567 so hard, Um, really, really, worked my arse off basically, sorry for my
568 language, but its true. I mean, I'd never studied so much in my life, I was
569 doing everything. I mean, it really hurt that I Um, cos I just, you know...
570 Going to school to get my GCSE results but less than a month beforehand I'd
571 taken that overdose and then that made me even more sad. You know...it
572 made me...I, I dunno. I'm not one of these people where I feel like I want to
573 commit suicide because I've got like a bad grade or anything, like some
574 people, but it did hurt me then I felt thick. And I thought my mum's right. And
575 then I thought this year, no that's not going to be the case, and I worked so
576 hard about...I'd say as soon as I got my GCSE results, I wanted to retake my
577 English. Which, I have done. I mean, I don't know how good I've done.

578 *Because you've been going to H training haven't you?*

579 Yeah.

580 *So was that from school? Did they arrange that?*

581 Yeah.

582 *So that's kind of sixth form?*

583 Well, no I didn't go into sixth form. I did all my course work at home or in
584 H training. J, my personal advisor would test me on certain questions,
585 Um, I mean, I hardly went into school. I only went in school for my exams.

586 *Right, so they just organised it*

587 Yeah

588 *Ok that's that. So we've answered lots of these questions along the way*
589 *Michelle. The first one was do you know why you went into care and why*
590 *you're in care now? I think we've kind of answered that one really. Um...tell*
591 *me about when you were living with your birth parents, how did they look after*
592 *you? Think we've answered that one?*

593 Yeah.

2e

594 *If there are things you want to add? Um...in what ways were your birth*
595 *parents interested in your school work?*

596 My mum was not interested. She wanted to look good, she wanted to look
597 like she was a good parent and she'd do anything for us. So that, so say I
598 did try to go to social services, it was Mum's game: "Well, I've helped
599 Michelle for her school work" and then the school can say, "well, she seems
600 like a caring mother and bla-bla-bla". You know, so it looks good, doesn't it?
601 She cared how I did. Yeah, fair enough she told me to show her my
602 homework diary every Sunday but that was like at nine 'o' clock at night, half
603 an hour before I had to go to bed. You know what I mean? So, it wasn't as if
604 she cared, it was only so she could sign it or something. Um, my dad on the
605 other hand, cos D was in Grammar school, was like, "why can't you be

606 more like your sister bla-bla-bla? She's younger than you, she's going to go
 607 further, try harder bla-bla-bla. Y'know". Cos he wasn't hardly ever around. I
 608 didn't have no one to help me on my homework. My mum was willing to help
 609 D but I had no one help me. So how was I gonna... I was struggling, to
 610 be honest with you. I was struggling a lot. That's why I never did good in
 611 maths. I got, y'know, I got a U in my GCSE for maths, that's how bad I am.
 612 But the thing was she never even helped me to do any of that so.... So She
 613 didn't care at all when it came to it. She'd care, y'know, she'd make it out like
 614 she cared but she didn't care.

PHASE 3

3a

615 *Ok, I'm going to ask you some questions about school now. When did you*
 616 *learn to read, can you remember?*

617 I started reading when I went to secondary school. I mean, I knew little things
 618 but everyone knew I was dyslexic cos I used to write my numbers back to
 619 front and stuff.

3b

620 *On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is I'm not good at reading at all and 10 I'm an*
 621 *excellent reader, where would you say you are now?*

622 10. Definitely. I read all the time, I write all the time, read all the time, so...

3d

623 *When I said lets talk about school and how you feel about school, I think*
 624 *we've probably covered that one. What were you good at, at school?*

625 English, drama, Um...music, I was in the school choir, and being rude to my
 626 ...teachers...getting thrown out of lessons! No I was only good at a couple of
 627 subjects, not...I didn't really get interested in the others, I'm more of a
 628 performing arts kind of person. I like to get noticed and that kind of thing, I
 629 don't want be a...where you...or, y'know, you gotta spend years in University
 630 and stuff like that. And some people they have nothing to show for it in the
 631 end. That's why I want to be a hairdresser and have my own salon. So I can
 632 get noticed and I want my name everywhere, in a good way. So that, my
 633 mum can say, "oh, crap", y'know. Cos she said that I wouldn't, I'll tell you
 634 what she said about me: I'll be 16, I would have a dirty place, that was untidy,
 635 Um, I'd have a kid with a black bloke, see my mum's very racist. Um, I'd have
 636 no money, I'd be on drugs, so to be honest with you, I don't touch
 637 drugs, y'know I have like a drink of, like, wine, or something with my friends,
 638 but that's it. Um, yeah I smoke cigarettes but no, do you see me with a baby,
 639 do you see like this terrible place.

640 *No it's immaculate*

641 So she always made N be the one that's going to have everything but
 642 N lives in a place that I wouldn't even put in a dog in and she's got a
 643 baby. See, it must be a bloomin'....y'know, I'm just saying, it's a world record
 644 that I'm the only wild child, who has not had a baby at 16. See my mums had
 645 one at 14, 15 and two of my older sisters have. So it's a record.

3e

646 *Thinking back to your school, did anybody help you at school?*

647 Miss D, she was special needs. She helped me with all my school
 648 work, I was in her special needs most of the time. The learning support
 649 group, they call it that now? And, um, she was brilliant, she really made sure
 650 that I kept up my reading, I had to read ten minutes a day. Um, she did you
 651 know..make sure that I did it, that I'd have a goal. Stupid things. We'd have
 652 commendations. So every commendation you got, if you get 15, then you'd
 653 get a certificate. So when Miss D, she'd give you vouchers. So like,

654 if you got 15 commendations, which weren't hard to get, cos you could get
655 them within a couple of days, so she'd do that. But um, you'd get that and
656 get the certificates

657 *It makes a difference doesn't it?*

658 Yeah and the higher you get the more, y'know, the more vouchers you get,
659 the more... yeah it's more fun.

660 *And was there somebody you felt you could talk to at school?*

661 Oh God. I just started talking to Mr H when he started work. But...

662 *He was your year head?*

663 Yeah, he was brilliant. I respect that man completely. Cos he will change
664 that school.

3f

665 *Now the next question, you'll have to think back to when you were living with*
666 *L and V was it? Did your school and carers talk to each other, did*
667 *they communicate?*

668 All the time.

669 *And how about school and Dawn or Jo?*

670 Yeah, but I got suspended for beating up a girl. No, she called me a baby
671 killer, and that I didn't have a home and this, that and the other. And she
672 scared me for the whole five years of being in school. And one day I had
673 enough. And I just dragged her out the school, so I couldn't get in trouble
674 within school but... And they suspended me on my birthday but they said it
675 was just, um, having a couple of days off to ... So they, y'know. Think
676 they felt guilty, cos it was my birthday.

677 *And who went to parents evenings?*

678 No-one. Not even my mum. I only had one parents evening that my mum
679 turned up to that was when Miss D told my mum I was dyslexic, my
680 mum went out f-ing and blinding and she never turned up to another. Cos I
681 felt so embarrassed I never told her there was one on.

682 *What about school sports days?*

683 My mum went to my little sisters and this still hurts me to this day. My mum
684 went to every single one of my little sisters sports days. And in P, my
685 friends, I used to see my friends homes, their mums and dads. They, y'know,
686 give them drinks and stuff and like that and the parents doing the little sports
687 things. I never got that.

3g

688 *And, the next one Michelle, what do you think, or what did you think, about*
689 *pupils in school knowing you were in care?*

690 Do you know what, there was so many people that always asked questions
691 and stuff. And there was one girl, she was meant to have been a very good
692 friend of mine, Carol, um, she goes to me, "I can't believe how strong you are.
693 If that had happened to me I would have gone over the edge already." And a
694 month later, I'd gone over the edge. But the thing is I didn't like it, really. I
695 didn't like it. Because you don't get treated, like you would usually. I'm not
696 being funny but it'd be like... usually people would talk to you, like you are, like
697 "Oh there's Michelle" (put on voice). Y'know, instead of "Oh there's
698 Michelle, the girl in care", do you know what I mean. Um, it was really

699 difficult, cos people were tip-toeing around you all the time, like I said. So,
700 people who are not your friends, haven't been your friends, all of a sudden,
701 "I'm so sorry" about this, that and the other. Like, when I had, when I was
702 pregnant I was the school story. You tell one person and it will go
703 everywhere. I told one of my friends, who I thought I could trust and, God, it
704 went so quick around that school, it was unbelievable. And everyone kept on
705 saying, "Are you gonna keep it? Are you gonna do this? Can I be Auntie? Bla-
706 bla-bla", you hear it every day. But I said to one girl, "you won't come round,
707 yeah fair enough you might start seeing it at the beginning, but what about
708 when we get older. You wanna go out, with your friends". Like clubbing or
709 something and I've got some kid to look after. Y'know 'mean? That's why I'm
710 glad in a way. It was the right decision. Because I'm doing things. I mean
711 you don't buy a house if you can't afford it do you?

712 So if you have a baby? Yeah, I mean I was looking at nappies. That's like ten,
713 fifteen pounds for a packet. And I was like, "ahh". Y'know, you can buy
714 yourself a nice top or a pair of shoes. I was thinking no y'know. I wanna
715 have my whole life, I want to have my salon and I will have a salon, I know I'm
716 oing to have a salon. I never say I'm, I want a salon but I don't know if I will
717 have one. My Nan and Grandad said if I become a stylist and if I work very
718 hard and I can prove it by working in a salon for a few years and if I'm still
719 interested they will help fund my salon. So, I know I'm going to have it.

720 *I believe you Michelle, I do.*

721 Because I want my mum to say, y'know for one day, my mum to, y'know, I
722 want my salon, you know like Toni and Guy? It's everywhere isn't it? And I
723 want that to be like my salon. I want it to have bigger branches, nearly
724 everywhere. Because one day, she'll, I want her to walk into the salon and it
725 to be my salon, and for her to be shocked.

3h

726 *Tell me about your friends... Lots of friends?*

727 Now? ...well, I have a few friends. I don't want to have too many friends, I see
728 friends as acquaintances. I've learnt that now. Before I would have done
729 anything for friends, y'know, I would have, if they became homeless "stay at
730 mine!", y'know, anything. But they're all...everyone's looking out for
731 themselves. So inside yourself, you're really, at my age, your...and, in like,
732 you're beginning...like, I've got friends that are in their twenties and they're
733 still looking out for themselves. So, they're going to see what they can get out
734 of other people, cos, y'know, that's what life's all about. So I don't see it as,
735 "oh, this is my best friend" anymore, I'm not like that anymore, cos I've had to
736 learn. My friends are a lot older than me, which hurts a lot at times,
737 cos...sometimes I wish I could be seventeen and have little slumber parties
738 and...I dunno...slag off boys, y'know do normal things, like drink milkshake
739 and not think I have to drink alcohol to have fun. Y'know, cos I've never had
740 that. And, I would love to just say, y'know, that's why I love, y'know, I'm
741 devoted to children. I love children. Um, like if I had...I've written a letter to
742 my parents, to ask if I can have the girls like a week in the summer holidays.
743 So if I get that week with them, I will be a child again. Do you know what I
744 mean, for that one week. I mean, we will be doing things like kids do, like,
745 being, drink milkshake all the time and, um, I'm a milkshake fan, do you know
746 what I mean- I do drink it and, um, just y'know play, pillow fights. I've never
747 had that and I just, y'know, I'd like to give them that week, cos in the summer
748 holidays its boring if your parents are working. That's why....

749 *Yeah. What do you like to do with your friends?*

750 Well, my friend Emma, she is going to be 23 soon . She's Lovely. Me and her
751 often go for drives cos she drives her own car. So, we'll go for like
752 drives...we'll go...you know like to Watermead, stuff like that, go to a pub
753 there and sit out in the garden, chat. See Emma's a person that I see as a

754 sister, kind of thing, she's the big sister that I've never had, cos my sisters
 755 have never been around, my big sisters. So she's been like that to me. Um,
 756 she's a good friend, but I'm not saying she'll be my best friend for ever, do
 757 'know what I mean, I've learnt not to look at it that way.
 758 Um, me and Marina, on the other hand, we're close...but I'm, see the thing is,
 759 I see Marina, like I look up to her in a big way. She's a stunning girl,
 760 completely stunning, she's an Italian and she's twenty-three soon and, um, I
 761 really look up to her, cos her house, she lives with her mum and dad, but her
 762 house, is beautiful. I mean, I look at it. So, Marina tells me that I should keep
 763 my house spotless, y'know, cos she says its nice to live, nice places instead
 764 of, you don't want people thinking wrongly of you at the end of the day. See,
 765 you don't look after your place, people are going to see that as, she don't
 766 give... so who should we. So, that's what she's like and I look up to her. So, I
 767 make sure I don't disappoint that. I'm going to look, I'm more, I'd be scared
 768 to disappoint her, y'know.
 769 So, that way...my friend David, who's gay, he and me are like brother and
 770 sister. We've been friends for nearly two years now and, um, we argue all the
 771 time, cos he's very feminine. We both say it how it is, so we both like to have

772 the last word, so its very difficult between us y'know. But we're always best
 773 riends that's the thing, we'll argue and everyone just laughs like, at 1A, like
 774 when I was living at 1A I used to say I'm not talking to David and like my key
 775 worker Diana used to say, "yeah, till tomorrow". Because we were together
 776 all the time, we're always together. We go shopping together, we always
 777 fancy the same bloke, so it's a bit annoying y'know, cos you think that your
 778 friend that's a bloke won't fancy who you like, because he's gay. Um, we fell
 779 out once cos he kissed my boyfriend. One of my boyfriends. Yeah, but to be
 780 honest with you, that's my friends.

781 *And have any of them been in care?*

782 No.

PHASE 5

5a

783 *Um, we might come back to school ones at the end. We talked about what*
 784 *you'd like to do in the future, where do you see yourself next year?*

785 To be honest with you, next year I'd like to- cos I want to start college this
 786 year- I would have liked to have, changed, like, done a complete makeover
 787 on myself. Not my outside but my inside. Like, um, I wanna, like, learn
 788 to...dunno...stay more focussed on what's going on and just stop looking in
 789 the past. So, that's what I want to make sure that I can achieve. So, it's
 790 hard. I mean, you didn't think, especially living by yourself, you get lonely
 791 and you'd think of sad times, you get lonely and you think of happy times, it still
 792 makes you cry. Cos, you're not having them happy times anymore, you've
 793 lost them...but they're still there you know what I mean? So, it's difficult. But
 794 want to make sure...I've got to get a part-time job, so I'm earning my own
 795 income. Um, I wanna...get loads of more bits for my house. Um, make a
 796 few more friends that are my age, say 2 friends at the most who are my age.

5c

797 *Where do you see yourself when you're say 25?*

798 When I'm 25? Um, I wanna be a stylist. Um, I want to...have every
 799 single...cos I want to carry on my English. So, just because I want to be a
 800 stylist doesn't mean that I don't care about my English anymore. So, I want
 801 to make a book, I want make sure that my book is published, so...I'm writing
 802 a book on my life basically, an autobiography. But it's not an autobiography
 803 cos, obviously I could get sued on certain things. So, I wanna make sure that
 804 it's someone else's, it's in someone else's name. If it says by Michelle, its
 805 about my life and, everything's true, for young people to read, do you know

806 what I mean? So...at the end of the day, God doesn't throw us anything we
807 can't handle. If we couldn't handle it, then we wouldn't get it y'know what I
808 mean? And all these people that commit suicide, or try to commit suicide are
809 doing it because they think they can't handle it. But I bet, if you thought about
810 it and if you just go to sleep, the next day you'll wake up and you think,
811 actually I can deal with that or you just go and ask for help.

6a

812 *Which brings us on to the next question. Now you've been through a lot in*
813 *your life Michelle some people would have found that really hard, how did*
814 *you cope?*

815 Um, to be honest with you, I'm not a very God person...but...I'm not a very
816 God person but, um what's helped me to cope is that I know that there's
817 always tomorrow. Y'know what I mean? I might be feeling a bit down today,
818 but tomorrow I'm going to get through it. Y'know, it's like, I don't
819 wanna...looking at certain things, I got through an abortion, I got through a
820 rape, so it helps me move on a bit. If I got through that, I got through trying
821 to commit suicide, so I can get through whatever. Do you know what I
822 mean? You may think at the time you can't get through it but now I just ask
823 for help...even though sometimes I don't get the help I want. So, it does
824 help, cos you know. And now, cos my great Nan, she was apparently a lot
825 like me when she was my age, and she just said to me that God doesn't
826 throw anything we can't handle. And that made me think, it did, and now it's
827 got my believing that my other great Nan, who's up there, is just kicking my
828 butt right back down here basically, because I want to do well and I don't want
829 people to think, "Oh, we were right about her." Cos I've locked myself in a
830 room for a week and, trust me, that's lonely when no one cares and no ones
831 there and if you want to be like that when you're dead, that's what its going to
832 be like forever. And no one really will care, do y'know what I mean? People
833 may say, "oh yeah bla-bla-bla", but you're the one that's alone. Do something
834 about it, that's what I think now. If I get upset about myself, I go for a walk, it
835 refreshes my mind.

6b

836 *Yep, I'm similar. Has there been anything which hasn't helped?*

837 Um, H training. I thought that would help me. But, I went away this
838 week, a week in Wales, I done outwardbounds course already, so I thought
839 I'd do it again. They asked me late notice, I said fine, y'know. I thought it
840 would be brilliant, it gives me that time to...have that kind of, someone else
841 looking after me, instead of me looking after myself. Getting all excited, Katie
842 took me out, my leaving care worker took me out shopping, £150 form the
843 leaving care team, which I thought was brilliant of them. They don't have to
844 do that, clothes shopping. Um, I was so excited but when I went there, I got
845 treated like crap, really badly from the girls. Cos it was three of us girls and I
846 got the singled out one. Y'know, the one that gets pushed out. Um, I'm
847 terrified of heights, cos the only reason is, cos when I was three years old, my
848 mum threw me down the stairs, and broke my arm. When I was three. Ok,
849 so that's made me have a fear of heights. I'm absolutely terrified of them and,
850 um, I did the abseiling...but, even if it was with someone else going down with
851 me. Last year, no, in February that I went to Wales, I wouldn't do it. I
852 refused. Not even when someone offered to go down with me, I said "No, I'm
853 not doing it." But I did it, still, and it felt I was crying and no, even y'know with
854 someone else. They still rubbed it in my face. Y'know, it was a horrible,
855 horrible, week. The teachers always got the wrong impressions: they thought
856 it was my fault the girls were being the way they were. I had to hang around
857 people I didn't know, but they were all like saying, "wow, you're such a nice
858 person", and stuff. And I was like, y'know, and at least I ...I went for me at
859 the end of the day. But now I've left Hayden training because of that.
860 Because that week, it really hurt me, I felt like I was... there was no way I
861 could go home because I was in Wales...um, I felt so sad all the time. And I
862 knew they was talking about me and you know when you go, like, you walk

863 into a room and it all goes quiet. That made me feel really annoyed. I hated it
864 and I regret going then. That hasn't helped me and I thought that week
865 would...but its made me learn that that I've got to move on

4a & 4b

866 *I was going to say maybe it will looking back, that you'll think it helped.*
867 *Do you mind if we go back to some of the school questions, if we've got time.*
868 *Um, these aren't all very relevant now, because of the where you are in your*
869 *life, but um, somewhere to do your homework, you could easily do it here,*
870 *could someone help you with schoolwork?*

871 Well, when I was doing my GCSE's, I had a lot of help from H training,
872 from Connexions, from my personal advisor and also from my Children's
873 Home. So, obviously here, I would have, if I was to do any more like, say I
874 do, completely bad...but, I, if I did do bad, if I don't get a C, I said I'll retake
875 them again. I don't care how many you times I do. As long as I get a grade

876 that is like wow, you know? And, um, basically, I will have Rose, cos she
877 doesn't, she only works every now and again part time, and she said that
878 she'd help me with anything. Um, Katie, my leaving care worker. I have Jill
879 and...my friend Emma or Marina will help me.

880 *And Jill's your PA isn't she?*

881 Yeah

4c

882 *What is there here that can help you with school work?*

883 I have, um, books. I don't need comp- I don't believe in computers. I'm one
884 that does not work them. I'm never, I'm not one who- right, Emma has a
885 Playstation, she brings it round here all the time, but I don't like that sort of
886 stuff, I think kids are wasting their time. I mean kids, they have spell-check,
887 so how's that teaching them how to spell. Do you know what I mean? It's all
888 that sort of stuff, so I don't agree with it. I'm dead against them!

889 *Do you have a library ticket?*

890 I buy my own books see. I, um, like to buy my own. I know it sounds silly but,
891 I mean...it's just then I've got my own books that I can read again and again
892 and again.

4e

893 *Does anyone from your birth family ask you about school and schoolwork and*
894 *how you're getting on?*

895 My Nan and Grandad.

896 *Is that your dads parents?*

897 Yeah, my step-dad's family. See, I've never met my real dad.

898 *I was going to say. I'd forgotten about...you said step-dad right at the*
899 *beginning. So which of you are by your dad and which of you by your step*
900 *dad?*

901 D, J that's from my Dad, no from my step-dad and me, N,
902 and C are from my real dad. From...right I'll make it easier for you:
903 P is mine and C and N's dad and he has never played a part
904 in our lives, except for he's seeing C now. Um, and T, my step-
905 father has looked after me since I was four months old, so he's...

906 *The one who's the mechanic...*

907 Yeah. He's a great man, though he's still 19 in his mind. (Shows photos)
 908 That's my Nan and Grandad on that one and that's me and my sisters and my
 909 dad. They're beautiful. They're very dark. See, I like drawing...

910 *Your Nan and Grandad look quite young...*

911 Yeah, my Grandad's 60 and my Nan's about 50. You see, I like drawing,
 912 so...(showed pictures)

913 *Yeah I saw those. Do you still see all your sisters?*

914 I hear from them every now and again

915 *Not even D?*

916 No, I hear from her...

917 *So where's D- is she still at home?*

918 Yeah, but the thing is, um, I'm very concerned...see, J only phones
 919 me now and again but she'll always have something to say, like, my mum, I
 920 have this fear, cos my mum's already started doing something abusive on
 921 J now.

922 *How old is J now?*

923 She's eleven on Thursday. She's a baby. She's so cute, the thing is, the
 924 poor girl has had to grow up so quickly, she may be eleven on Thursday but
 925 she's more fifteen. Do you know what I mean? But we've all had to. It's
 926 unfair to see her like that, it, do y'know, I want her to be...she's got no friends.

927 *Does Dawn know about your worries? How does she feel about it?*

928 She thinks, I should like, speak to, cos my Nan and Grandad told me some
 929 stuff as well and I'm terrified to be honest with you, cos it does worry me a lot,
 930 but we have no faith in the social services and, I don't know. I know that...

931 *It sounds like you've got faith in Dawn?*

932 Yeah, but, the thing is, J is in a completely different area to me. Um, I
 933 don't know. I really, I don't...it's hard, it's very hard. Do you know what I
 934 mean? You don't know what to do, because...you can't really help. You can
 935 help by getting someone else to help but,...no matter how much you want to
 936 help, you can't. But... I keep thinking about it and like, I know what I should
 937 do and I know what I shouldn't do but... I'll speak to my Nan and Grandad
 938 anyway.

939 *Yeah, if you really are worried about her safety, then you ought to phone the*
 940 *social services.*

941 They get, I mean she has no friends, she goes B secondary in
 942 September. So, hopefully she'll make friends. She hasn't got a single friend.
 943 She spends most of her time at home, like I did. And I just feel sorry for her.

944 *It sounds like you're an important person for her.*

945 Well, I speak to her, y'know, on like, on the phone and that, but I don't hardly
 946 get to speak to her often, cos I have to phone her obviously, my mum refuses
 947 any contact between me and the girls.

948 *How old's D now?*

949 Fourteen.

950 *She's still at home too?*

951 Yeah, she goes to HG School, she's very clever. She's the
952 only one who passed her blooming eleven plus, out of the lot of us. Well, I
953 was told there was no point in me doing mine, cos I'd fail, that's what my mum
954 said...which really upset me. The only one and I'm really impressed with her.
955 She'll go far.

956 *How about N and C? Do you have contact with them?*

957 C's moved to Jersey to live to live with her real Dad and, um, N
958 and me we've only spoken once within two and a half years and I wanted to
959 make amends for the past. N, on the other hand, wanted to bear
960 grudges, so we left it at that. The thing I feel sorry for her about is, some day
961 my mums' going to lose, lose everyone except form N, my mum and
962 N are two peas in the pod. So N as well will be very lonely cos no-
963 one likes her anymore. They're both going to be lonely. Yeah, because
964 people can't go to our weddings. Do you know what I mean, it's like D
965 and J and Mum and that 'cos mum has split this family up. My mum
966 has destroyed our family. She's turned everyone against one another. She's
967 tried her best to. She stops my dad from seeing his own parents. So, I don't
968 think, that when it comes to us getting married, that we could exactly have
969 this whole big family, y'know, cos everyone'd be blimming trying to kill each
970 other. So...it's the truth though. So, who would come to our weddings?
971 That's, y'know, that's what makes me think, y'know, she was never, I mean, I
972 be...I don't bear grudges but there's forgiving but then there's forgetting. Do
973 you know what I mean? I can forgive but I cannot forget. I'm one of these
974 people where I won't forget what you've done to me and I'll remember, just in
975 case...do you know what I mean? And, um, I personally, won't be
976 here when she's on her deathbed. Cos of everything. Basically, she once
977 tried to strangle me. She's done so much of that. She's wanted me dead.
978 So...that's not normal mother stuff.

5d

979 *That's not normal mother stuff. I think this is the last one actually. It's alright,*
980 *we've skipped about a bit actually, looking through....Where do you think, you*
981 *know when we were talking about where you might be when you're 25 or*
982 *when you are, say, 35. Where do you think these people might see you when*
983 *you are that much older.*

984 What when I'm 35?

985 *Yeah, 20 years older then you are now, say? Well, one of them was a*
986 *teacher, so, perhaps Jill, your personal advisor, where would she think you*
987 *might be when you're 35?*

988 She'd...I don't think she'd, um, she's not one of these people to say where
989 someone's going to be, where she'd expect someone to be. But I think she
990 knows I'll do good, no matter what. Do y'know what I mean. She's one of
991 them people...

992 *She has faith in you. How about Rose?*

993 Um...well, me and Rose will, we've only just been mixing this month. So I
994 mean, she knows, cos I help her with her painting and stuff like that. I mean, I
995 was painting the shed for her. But, I don't know what she might think.

996 *What about Dawn?*

997 Well, Dawn says I'll go far. She's always saying, that because apparently,
998 um, I've impressed many people but I've helped them cos like, with problems
999 of their own. so...

1000 *What about Mum?*

1001 Ahh...my mum wants to hope the worst for me, no matter what happens.
1002 So...I'm going to prove her wrong.

1003 *What about Dad?*

1004 My Dad...bless him. He wants to have faith in me and he wants to be able to
1005 think of that and he...he can't believe how far I've come from how I was at
1006 home. But, he doesn't know what my dreams are, do you know what I mean?
1007 But I think he knows that I'm not a stupid girl, so when I'm in my thirty fives,
1008 like, something like that, I'll make sure...but you know. Cos I want children
1009 and I want them when I reach my thirties but I know, he'll know that I've
1010 probably been married cos I don't, will not have kids until I'm married and I've
1011 been in that marriage for a while. Um, so I think he'll expect that from me, cos
1012 he'll know that's what I'm like. Yeah...he doesn't know my real dreams but I
1013 don't think...there's no point in telling him. Cos he's always wanted a boy
1014 himself, he's tried to turn us lot, like into little lads, so y'know. J acts
1015 like a little lad, like she's always washing the car and everything. She's very
1016 close to my dad.

1017 *What about one of your sisters. D?*

1018 D...she knows what I'm going to be like. Me and her used to say we're
1019 all going to have a place together and I'd have my own business and D
1020 would have her own as well. D is a very, very clever girl, very clever
1021 but she'll want to do something and then she'll change her mind, but I know
1022 that D, she, I reckon she'll go into modelling and stuff. I've got that
1023 feeling, cos she's always had that in the back of her mind. She's had lots of
1024 pictures taken of her, she...

1025 *But what do you think she'd say you'll be doing?*

1026 I dunno! I think, she's always telling me, y'know, she's one of these people
1027 that, she, cos she's so advanced - she pushes me forward. She'll know that,
1028 she's knows that I want to be a hairdresser...she's always pushing me. She's
1029 always like...y'know. She pushed me to do my GCSE's.

1030 *And what about Katie? Have you known her long?*

1031 Katie. I've known her for a while - she makes me laugh. Um, me and Katie
1032 are very close, so, like, when I'm 35 in that different time, I'd make sure that
1033 me and her are still good friends and I think she would expect the best of me,
1034 no matter what. You know, cos...cos she's always saying how I make her job
1035 a little bit easier, with, than, you know, with me: I'm not one of these people
1036 that have dropouts in my house y'know. Leaving care, It's really hard for them
1037 cos kids waste their money on stupid things, then phone up and say "I'm
1038 skint". That sort of thing. Where there's me and, Ok, I've got this amount of
1039 money and I've got like this, this, this but y'know, and I want to save this
1040 much. So, no, um, I would presume she thinks I'll do well. Yeah, anyway
1041 he'll be the only one that's going to my wedding, she'll be my maid of honour.

1042 *Well, that's all the questions Michelle, thank-you for talking to me so openly.*

1043 That's alright...

1044 *Is there anything else, are there any questions you'd like to ask me? Is there*
1045 *anything I haven't asked, which you'd thought I'd ask? Is there anything else*
1046 *that you'd like to tell me about that you think would be important?*

1047 All I think is that school's should open their eyes a bit more. If you're happy at
1048 home, why would you go and complain? Y'know what I mean. And, yeah fair
1049 enough, some kids complain, but me and my sisters complained several
1050 times until we got listened to. So, schools should really, really open their
1051 eyes. And they say about, "oh we need proof" and stuff like this, y'know, they
1052 think like that. But, um, if you see a kid that's acting strangely in school, there
1053 must be a reason for it, y'know what I mean? Schools don't open their eyes
1054 up and all they're worried about is blimming ruining their own reputation.
1055 They've got to start, y'know, I think they've got to get more involved, I think, I
1056 think...

1057 *With what's happening with the governments and stuff there is more of a drive*
1058 *for schools and social workers to work more closely together.*

1059 But they don't seem to know...it's a very difficult. And I reckon, we didn't
1060 have a school counsellor, we had matron. So, it wasn't, you know she would
1061 blab everything round the school...I reckon that schools should like have a
1062 counsellor that comes into the school say, two times a week or something,
1063 um, like,...have certain people that they can see, you know that the
1064 schools say we're concerned about this person. Or, and then you have a
1065 drop in day...

Interview with Robert

2a

1 *Can you tell me about the people you have lived with, starting with your birth*
2 *family?*

3 Birth family, I've got to think about that actually . What so that means my
4 brothers and stuff.

5 *Your Mum and Dad and brothers and sisters*

6 Can't really remember my mum cos she died ages ago when I was
7 about 3 or 4. Brother, got two brothers called S, one's S, one's
8 J.

9 *Are they older than you or younger than you?*

10 Stuart's 14, think he's coming up for 15 nearly and my other brother is 16.

11 *So you're the youngest?*

12 Yes.

13 *And how about about Dad, Robert?*

14 He's alright. My dad lives with S. Sis the only one who lives with
15 my Dad at the moment and my other brother, J, lives in A.

16 *How long did you live with Mum and Dad? Then Dad.*

17 Um, I lived with my Mum and Dad for about 3 or 4 years. About 3 years, I
18 was about 3 when I moved out, and moved to, I think it was, oh I can't
19 remember for certain but I know one of the boys there is called R.

20 *Is that a foster carer?*

21 Yes he had his own trains in the back garden

22 *How long did you live there?*

23 About a year or two

24 *Where did you move after that?*

25 I went to N's.

26 *Is she another foster carer?*

27 Yes

28 *And how long did you live there?*

29 Can't remember, about a year or two

30 *o.k. And after that.*

31 Then I moved to R, cos, then and my other brother J, moved
32 to R with me. So we lived together with the foster carer for a while.

33 *And how long were you there Robert?*

34 We were only there for about a year. Our foster parents who were looking
35 after us got me and my brothers back to Dad.

36 *Right. So all three of you back to Dad?*

37 Yes, then we moved back out cos there was a little bit more hassle still cos
 38 my mum and that, so J moved back out, S's fine now so he stayed
 39 there.

40 *So where did you move then?*

41 What when I moved out from my Dad? I moved here.

42 *How long have you been here?*

43 About a year now. I was with my Dad for about 2 years, 3 years then I
 44 moved here.

45 *Can you tell me anything you know, say no if you don't want to Robert.*
 46 *You said there was hassle and it was about your mum. Can you tell me*
 47 *anything about that hassle?*

48 No

49 *Was it arguments or*

50 No, not really

51 *Is it that you can't tell me or you don't want to?*

52 Don't want to.

53 *that's fine*

2b

54 *Schools, Robert, can you tell me about the schools you have been to?*

55 Been to one in R. Can't remember the name

56 *Don't need it.*

57 Oh, one in B, that was G that was.

58 *Right*

59 Can't remember the other two now.

60 *You've been to two others?*

61 Yeah, and I've been to PB, the one that's just across there

62 *Oh right.*

63 I only went there for about for 3 or 4 months. And then I moved to W
 64 H School from there cos that was only temporary until they found me a
 65 better school. At least I was in school.

66 *Yeah definitely. So there was one other but you're not sure what it was. Is*
 67 *that right?*

68 No

69 *Was it a secondary school or primary school?*

70 Primary school. The school I'm at is secondary.

71 *Yes I know WH School. So when you left primary school, you*
72 *went to PB for a bit and now you're at WH.*

73 *Yeah, I was going to go to B Secondary School but I didn't cos I*
74 *moved here.*

75 *Yeah. No that makes sense.*

2c

76 *o.k. So Robert, do you know why you went into care when you were 3 or 4?*
77 *You don't know*

78 *Oh yeah, cos my dad couldn't cope with us, cos my mum just died so*
79 *couldn't cope with us.*

80 *O.k. This may be a question you don't want to answer. Did mum die*
81 *suddenly, unexpectedly or was she ill?*

82 *I think she had cancer, she had leukaemia*

83 *Oh right. Sad with three little boys.*

84 *You may not remember some of these, cos they're about when you were very*
85 *little but if you can remember.*

2d

86 *Can you tell me when you were living with mum and dad, how did they look*
87 *after you?*

88 *I can't remember.*

89 *How about when you were living with dad later.*

90 *Just like I live here*

91 *So he looked after you... ..*

92 *But he didn't lock the cupboards*

93 *So what happened?*

94 *He just left em normally and the drawers and that but the sharp knives he put*
95 *away*

96 *Oh I see, so they lock the cupboards here*

97 *Cos you never know who you get here you see. They nick your stuff, you*
98 *won't find them again.*

99 *I see what you mean. I didn't click that, I thought you meant you were able to*
100 *get lots of food and things like that, but no, it's because they do here*

2e

101 *And in what ways were your birth parents and in what ways has dad been*
102 *interested in your school work?*

103 *I don't know really. He comes to Parents Evenings and stuff like that*

104 *Does he help, or did he help with your school work when you were living with*
105 *him.*

106 *He's not very good at reading and writing, so if I need, I ask my brother or*

- 107 something cos he's a better reader.
- 108 *O.K. and the next questions Robert are about school.*

PHASE 3

3a

- 109 *Where did you learn to read? Can you remember?*
- 110 Yeah, at G that's when I first started reading.
- 111 *Can you remember how old you were roughly?*
- 112 About nine. cos I was in about year 6
- 113 *So you needed a bit of extra help.*
- 114 Yeah

3b

- 115 *And thinking about where you are now Robert on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1*
116 *is I'm not good at reading at all and 10 is I'm excellent at reading, where*
117 *would say you are now roughly?*
- 118 What now?
- 119 Yes
- 120 About 8
- 121 *Why would you say you're an 8?*
- 122 Cos, well at first I couldn't read at all but now I get these books from school
123 and this person come in and she gives me some books, Wellington Square
124 books. Have you heard of those?
- 125 *Oh right, Yes*
- 126 And she give me the hard ones. They're quite good those ones.
127 I've got a lot since I've been there, reading those books
- 128 *Do you like reading now?*
- 129 Yes
- 130 *Do you read at home*
- 131 Yes

3c

- 132 *And tell me about school Robert, how do you feel about school? School*
133 *now.*
- 134 *Do you like it*
- 135 Umm
- 136 *What do you enjoy about school?*
- 137 Play pool at break time, go in the IT rooms

138 *o.k. Is there anything you don't enjoy in school?*

139 PE, its alright some times, depends. Depends who's in the class. See if
 140 there's only two of us, we only go and play pool. It gets a bit boring after a
 141 while, we go and play it at every break time. At our school, yeah, we have
 142 sheets, little sheets, so we know if we're not good enough, on green sheets
 143 we can't play pool, can't go and play in the gym and if you want a yellow
 144 sheet you can go on the hard court

145 *Hard court, what's that for basketball, football and stuff*

146 Yeah, play tennis on there sometimes.

147 *Is there often only 2 of you in the class?*

148 No, there's 6, I think there's about 5 of us. No, 6 in our class.

149 *So if everyone hasn't been very good, they are not allowed to do things, is*
 150 *that's why there are only 2 of you?*

151 No, it depends cos people in our school, a lot get excluded and stuff like that
 152 so, and they're excluded. Cos this week, when people have been in cos
 153 they're boarders, junior boarders went out to camp so I was the only one in
 154 class, I didn't do much, I went out . They didn't make me do work cos I'd be
 155 way ahead of them.

156 *Why didn't you go to camp?*

157 Cos only the boarders went.

158 *Oh, I see. OK.*

3d

159 *What are you good at school Robert?*

160 Maths.

161 *Anything else?*

162 Science, I'm alright at.

163 *Do you take part in any clubs or any other activities?*

164 No. I take part in table tennis.

165 *Right. And do you like going in for competitions and things?*

166 What, table tennis competitions?

167 Yes

168 Not at the moment but next season I will be.

3e

169 *And does anybody help you at school Robert?*

170 Yeah, we have LSAs who help us

171 *And do you have somebody at school you can talk to?*

172 Yeah my teacher

3f

173 *Do you feel your school, who is your link worker here Robert?*

174 Nicky

175 *Do you feel that school and Nicky talk a lot?*

176 Yes, sometimes, she comes to me and says oh, you've had a good week at
177 school

178 *That's good.*

179 Say if I had a bad week at school, they won't want to do anything at the
180 weekend with me, cos, what's the point, you've had a bad week, why should
181 you get treats for nothing.

182 *Do you have lots of bad week or good weeks?*

183 I have quite a few good weeks but I used to have a lots of bad ones but now
184 its alright

185 *What's changed?*

186 Don't know really. Just got used to school and that

187 *And who goes to things like Parents Evenings or Sports Day?*

188 People in 1A, and my dad probably but my link worker would probably come if
189 she's on

190 *And how about school and Lynette, do they talk, do you know?*

191 No, not as far as I know.

3g

192 *OK. The next couple of questions have come out of the research you know*
193 *from what people have done in the past. What do you think of other pupils*
194 *saying you are in care?*

195 I don't mind, but the thing is sometimes they take the mickey out of you.

196 *What kind of things do they say?*

197 I don't know, really, they say I live in a childrens' home

198 *Do the other young people in your class, know you are in care?*

199 Yes, most people I think

200 *The next question you have kind of answered so don't answer it if you don't*
201 *want to. It's do you think other people in your class, treat you differently*
202 *because you are in care?*

203 No they treat me the same as everyone else really.

204 *Is that because they take the mickey out of other people for other things, is*
205 *that right?*

206 Yes

207 *And has there ever been, like when you were at other schools, did people*
208 *treat you differently then because of being in care?*

209 No, Because it ain't just me in that school in care, lots of other people are
210 in care.

3h

211 *Tell me about your friendships, Robert. Would you say you've got lots of*
212 *friends?*

213 Yeah, I've got quite a few

214 *Are they mainly from school?*

215 Yeah, mainly from school

216 *Are they mainly in care or mixture, or it doesn't matter*

217 Yeah,

218 *So it's a mixture really. And what do you like doing together?*

219 Things like going to the IT room, play on game on the PC Two player, medal
220 ones.

PHASE 4

4a

221 *Right and these next questions are about here about you live now – where*
222 *do you do your homework Robert?*

223 I don't have homework

224 *You don't have any homework?*

225 Yeah, sometimes

4b

226 *And is there somebody here who can help with your school work?*

227 Yeah, just ask someone, if they're not busy they help you.

228 *What ways do they help you?*

229 They help you work out the questions, talk through them and stuff like that

4c

230 *And what do you have here to help you with your school work?*

231 We have a computer and we have books, encyclopaedias and things like that

232 *Do you have a library ticket?*

233 Yeah

234 *Do you use it?*

235 No, not that much really

4d

236 *And who at home asks you about school?*

237 When I come back they say "Have you had a good day or not" and it's easiest
238 telling them whether I've had a good day or not cos they'll find out anyway.
239 Either way they'll find out cos my teacher rings up to say if I've had a good

240 week or not.

4e

241 *And does anybody from your birth family, say does Dad, ask you about*
242 *school about how you are getting on?*

243 Yes.

244 *Anybody else?*

245 My stepmum does but I don't care much about her.

246 *Anybody else?*

247 Not really

4f

248 *And how does your social worker, how does Lynette think you are getting on*
249 *at school? Do you know?*

250 She thinks I'm getting on alright at the moment. These couple of weeks.

PHASE 5

5a

251 *Now the next section Robert, I'm going to ask you about your plans and*
252 *dreams for the future. O.k. Do you think about what might happen next*
253 *year? What you might be doing next year.*

254 Still, living here probably.

255 *o.k. anything else?*

256 No

5b

257 *And what do you think, have you started to think about what you might want*
258 *to do when you leave school?*

259 Nothing much when I leave school I'll probably go to H training probably,
260 depends on whether I get any good qualifications.

5c

261 *And where do you see yourself Robert? Say, when you are 25.*

262 I don't know

263 *Any thoughts at all?*

264 Living on my own. Nothing else really.

5d

265 *Now I'm going to ask you about some different people and where there might*
266 *think you'll be say when you are 30, 35. Say, if I ask you about one of your*
267 *teachers, where do you think they might see you?*

268 Back in school

269 *When you're 30?*

270 Visiting

271 *What do you think they might think you'll be doing? If I said to them, I don't*

272 *know, give me one of your teachers – Mrs L. Mrs. L where do you*
 273 *think Robert will be when he is 35?*

274 She might say, getting a job

275 *What kind of job? Any thoughts?*
 276 No

277 *What about Nicky?*

278 I don't know really.

279 *And Lynette?*

280 No, cos I wouldn't have one anymore. I'll probably have a leaving care
 281 worker, but, not at that age

282 *And if I ask Lynette now where she'll she thinks you will be when you are 30?*

283 She don't know.

284 *She don't know. What about your dad?*

285 I don't know really. Probably think living on my own, have a nice reputation.

286 *And what about one of your brothers?*

287 They'll think the same

288 *The last person is any other adult who you're close to or who is interested in*
 289 *you?*

290 Not really

291 *Can't think of anybody?*

292 No

PHASE 6

6a

293 *I know you've had lots of changes in your life Robert. Some people might*
 294 *have found that really hard. How would you say that you have coped with*
 295 *being in care.*

296 Alright I've been in care for seven years now, got used to it or I've been in and
 297 out of care, so I get used to it. Don't mind really. I know what's going to
 298 happen really.

299 *What do you mean, you know what's going to happen?*

300 Say if I'm going to be put back in care, I know what the circumstances are
 301 gonna be, been there, done it before.

6b

302 *What's helped you cope. Is there anything that you can think of that helped?*

303 Not really

6c

304 *Has there been anything that hasn't helped?*

305 No

306 *You've kind of made comments about social workers changing*

307 Oh when we were first, no, before , when I moved here yeah, basically I didn't
308 speak to her, she was saying she was too busy, stuff like that, but the thing is,
309 what bothered me yeah, she was supposed to, she said she visited me
310 and times she's supposed to come and see me, she don't. She's supposed
311 to see me every 3 weeks, now its once very 2 months ain't it? Something like
312 that. Once every couple of weeks the social worker's supposed to come and
313 see you. My new social worker is perfect, she comes all the time.

314 *So that's helping is it?*

315 Yeah, my old social worker wouldn't even come to my reviews. Oh, I'm too
316 busy, I had to sort out something else sorting out other people's work.

317 *That can't have been very helpful really.*

318 Not really

319 *Is there anything else that you can think of Robert? That has helped or*
320 *hasn't helped*

321 Not really

Interview with Johnny

2a

- 1 *Can you tell me about the people you have lived with starting with your birth*
2 *family*
- 3 Don't remember birth family
- 4 At 3 years – moved to foster carers, it was OK. Bad things went on there –
5 can't say what.
- 6 Have 3 brothers and sisters, all in contact
- 7 When I was 7 I moved to Nan's for 4 years, then when I was 11 I moved here.
8 Baby A, son of foster carers, he's out in the garden, foster girl S and
9 foster baby.

2b

- 10 *And what about schools?*
- 11 AS Combined then I Junior when I was with Nan then
12 W

2c

- 13 *Do you know why you went into care and why you are in care now?*
- 14 Don't know why went into care.
15 See birth parents once a month, see them separately, not together.

2d

- 16 *Tell me about when you were living with your birth parents, how did they look*
17 *after you?*
- 18 Don't know.
- 19 *How about when you were with Nan*
- 20 Really well.

2e

- 21 *In what ways were your birth parents interested in your school work? Did they*
22 *help you?*
- 23 Nan helped with schoolwork

PHASE 3

3a

- 24 *When did you learn to read, can you remember?*
- 25 Really little school

3b

- 26 *On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is "I'm not good at reading at all" and 10 is I'm*
27 *excellent at reading, where would you say you are now?*
- 28 7 – I'm quite good at tests.

3c

- 29 *Tell me about school, how do you feel about school?*

30 Enjoy the chance to get out of the house and mess about with my mates. I
31 enjoy PE.

3d

32 *What are you good at, at school?*

33 PE and drama, science, music

34 *And are you involved in clubs another activities?*

35 Rugby, football, cricket, athletics. I have represented the school in all of them

3e

36 *Does anyone help you at school? In what ways?*

37 Learning support help me understand words – once a week. Nothing else

3f

38 *Do you feel your school and carers talk a lot?*

39 Yes – if I have detentions or at parents evening. I go to school plays, the
40 foster carers don't as they have small children.

41 *How about your school and social worker?*

42 Don't know.

3g

43 *What do you think about other pupils knowing you are in care? Do the other*
44 *young people in your class know you are in care?*

45 Most know.

46 *Do you think they treat you differently because you are in care? Now or in the*
47 *past?*

48 No. I act the same way before and after they know

3h

49 *Tell me about your friendships. Would you say you have a lot of friends?*

50 Yes – lots of friends

51 *What do you like to do with your friends?*

52 Go uptown, play sport, listen to music. We go to each other's houses.

53 *Are any of your friends in care?*

54 Can't think of any who are in care, no none of them.

PHASE 4

4a

55 *Where do you do your homework?*

56 Table when the kids have gone to bed or I do it on the living room. I have
57 homework most nights.

4b

57 *Can someone help you with schoolwork?*

58 Penny (foster carer) loads.

59 *How does she help you?*
60 She tells me what she knows about questions when I can't do one then I write
61 what I know.

4c

62 *What do you have at home to help you with schoolwork?*

63 I have a laptop from social services for my GCSE's.

64 *Do you have books?*

65 There are lots of books I can use

66 *And do you have a library ticket*

67 Yes

68 *Do you use it?*

69 Yes

4d

70 *Who asks you at home about school and how you are getting on?*

71 Penny. She picks me up from school every day.

4e

72 *Does anyone from your birth family ask you about school and how you are*
73 *getting on?*

74 No

75 *How old are your brothers and sisters?*

76 My brothers are 19 and 15-16. The second one's at college. My sister is 16-
77 17. We get on really well and go out together.

4f

78 *How does your social worker think you are getting on at school?*

79 Getting on quite well

80 *What GCSE courses are you taking next year?*

81 Maths, English, science, ICT, drama, music and PE

PHASE 5

5a

82 *Do you think about what might happen next year?*

83 I take each day as it comes. I'll probably be here, in the same place next year.

5b

84 *What do you want to do when you leave school?*

85 I want to be a GP. When I lived with my Nan, I helped her when she was ill
86 and I wanted to be a GP from then.

5c

87 *Where do you see yourself when you are, say, 25 years old?*

88 In University, or in a house somewhere living with my mates.

5d

89 *Where do you think these people would see you when you are 20 years*
90 *older?*

91 *Teacher?*

92 That would be my for tutor. They'd say I'll be a Doctor

93 *Penny? (FC)*

94 Doctor

95 *Social worker?*

96 Don't know

97 *Mum?*

98 Do the best with my life, GP and university

99 *Dad?*

100 Don't know

101 *Sibling?*

102 Pushing me (the 2nd oldest)

103 *Any other interested adult?*

104 No, I can't think of anyone else.

PHASE 6

6a

105 *How would you say that you have coped with being in care?*

106 Quite well. I'm still doing my best in school and don't have any problems. I
107 just get on with it.

6b

108 *What has helped you?*

109 The people I've lived with here

6c

110 *Has there been anything which hasn't helped?*

111 No, nothing's been difficult.

Interview with Penny

2a

1 *Can you tell me about people you've lived with, starting with your birth family?*

2 I lived with my Mum and Dad together until I was about 8 and then I lived with
3 just my mum and then I've had about 9 foster carers since then until now.

4 *And do you know why you moved to all those foster carers?*

5 Yeah

6 *Can you tell me a little more about that?*

7 Some of them, one of them, I don't know really. Cos of my behaviour towards
8 them that's caused me to move a couple of times umm and I didn't get on
9 with someone so that made me move too.

2b

10 *And how about schools, which schools have you been to?*

11 I've been to three secondary schools already and that's because I've moved
12 placements, so schools were too far to travel

13 *How about primary schools?*

14 I stayed at the same one

15 *And which one was that one*

16 FE Combined

17 *And which secondary schools have you been to?*

18 GM, F Upper and B

19 *And where was F Upper?*

20 In B

21 *And how long have you been here Penny?*

22 Since November

23 *Oh right. You've got a long journey from W, haven't you?*

24 Yeah

25 *How long does it take you in the mornings?*

26 About an hour

2c

27 *Do you know why you went into care first of all?*

28 Yeah, because my mum's mentally ill.

29 *Do you want to tell me anything more about that or not?*

30 I don't know much more than that

31 *Where's Mum now?*

- 32 She lives in LE
- 33 *Do you see her?*
- 34 I see her now and again, but not very often.
- 35 *How about Dad, do you see Dad?*
- 36 I see Dad every week
- 37 *Where does Dad live now?*
- 38 He lives in HW, D
- 39 *OK, can I ask you Penny, this is a more sensitive question, do you know why*
 40 *you're not living with dad?*
- 41 Yes. Because he can't control my behaviour and I'm rude to his wife.
- 42 *Have you got brothers and sisters?*
- 43 No
- 44 *No half brothers and sisters?*
- 45 No

2d

- 46 *And can you tell me about, thinking about when you lived with your birth*
 47 *parents, can you tell me about how they looked after you?*
- 48 Just normal, like a normal child
- 49 *What did that mean for you?*
- 50 Um, feed me, clothe me, do things with me, love me

2e

- 51 *Yep. And in what ways were they interested in your school work?*
- 52 They always used to come to parents evenings, read my reports and things
- 53 *Did they help you?*
- 54 Yeah they did.

PHASE 3

3a

- 55 *These next questions are a bit more about school. When did you learn to*
 56 *read, can you remember?*
- 57 Um, must have been first school
- 58 *Did you think you were the same as everybody else, do you remember having*
 59 *to have extra help?*
- 60 I had extra help

3b

- 61 *Thinking about now on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is I'm not good at reading at*
 62 *all and 10 is I'm an excellent reader, where would you say you are now?*

63 About 7
64 *Why would you put yourself at 7.*
65 Cos I can read I'm not that good at it, but I can

3c

66 *Tell me about school, how do you feel about school?*

67 I hate school
68 *What do you enjoy in school?*
69 I enjoy drama and being with my friends
70 *What don't you enjoy in school?*

71 Teachers

3d

72 *Anything else? What are you good at, at school? Reading? Drama? Art?*

73 Drama – yes
74 *PE, Science?*
75 RS. Just the drama and RS
76 *How about making friends?*
77 Yes. I've got lots of close friends

3e

78 *Does anybody help you in school? In what ways?*

79 Not really
80 *With work?*
81 No
82 *Someone to talk to?*
83 Yes, Ms C.
84 *She's your form tutor.*
85 Yes

3f

86 *Do you feel that school and your foster parents talk a lot?*

87 Yeah, they do.
88 *Can you tell me about when they talk to each other?*
89 It's mostly, cos my Head of year at the moment keeps ringing up and
90 checking cos I've been bunking a lot off school, so they're talking about tutor
91 group things to try and keep me in school
92 *How about when things are going well?*
93 They don't really, they do when I've been really good they do.

94 *Who comes to Parents Evenings?*

95 My dad normally.

96 *Sports Day or School Play?*

97 No-one really

98 *Would you want them to*

99 No

100 *Do you go to things like that?*

101 Sometimes, yeah.

3g

102 *And what do you think Penny about other pupils knowing you are in care?*

103 It doesn't bother me any more. It used to, but..

104 *Tell me how it used to bother you.*

105 I don't know, it was because you're different, not living with your parents and
106 now I don't care anymore. It's there problem not mine, so. If they've got a
107 problem with me being in care, cos I'm not with my parents, they feel sorry for
108 you

109 *Do you think people have treated you differently because you are in care?*

110 I think so yeah.

111 *Can you tell me in what way?*

112 Not really, but I think they have. They're more wary of me, they ask questions
113 why

114 *How have you dealt with that?*

115 I just explain why and stuff and then they'll be fine. They become really good
116 friends.

117 *Is there anything Penny you said it used to bother you but not anymore, was*
118 *there anything that changed that do you think?*

119 No, apart from I just grew up and realised that I don't care anymore.

3h

120 *Tell me about your friendships. Would you say you've got lots of friends?*

121 Yes.

122 *Where do most of your friends live?*

123 In B

124 *School friends?*

125 Yeah. I have got some friends who live in HW as well.

126 *What do you like to do with your friends?*

- 127 Hang around mainly, go shopping
- 128 *Are any of your friends in care or are most of them outside care?*
- 129 I've got a couple of friends who live in A who are in care.
- 130 *And are they in school?*
- 131 Yeah

PHASE 4

4a

- 132 *The next question is about where you live now? Where do you do your*
- 133 *Homework?*
- 134 At home, in my room
- 135 *What's it like in your room, is it noisy, quiet, have you got a desk?*
- 136 It's quiet. Well, there are loads of people who live in my house, so it's never
- 137 quiet.
- 138 *Who lives in your house then?*
- 139 There's my foster mum, her boyfriends, her three children me and two other
- 140 children. There's quite a lot of us.
- 141 *How old are all the others?*
- 142 There's one the same age as me, one who's 20, one who's 17, one who's 13
- 143 and one who's 8.
- 144 *You're in the middle somewhere. How's that?*
- 145 Yeah, it's fine. I get on with them really well.

4b

- 146 *Is there somebody who can help you with school work?*
- 147 Yes, my foster mum can help me with school work.
- 148 *And does she?*
- 149 Umm, she does now and again when I ask for it, but I don't normally ask for it.
- 150 *And in what ways has she helped you when you've asked her?*
- 151 Like with my English essays I've asked her to help me re-write things,

4c

- 152 *And what do you have at home to help you with your school work?*
- 153 A computer, the internet.
- 154 *Uh-huh. Books?*
- 155 Yeah , we've got books
- 156 *Have you got a library ticket?*
- 157 Yes
- 158 *Do you use it?*

159 Now and again

4d

160 *Who asks you at home about school and how you're getting on?*

161 My foster Mum

4e

162 *Does anybody from your birth family ask you about school and how things are*
163 *going?*

164 Yeah, my dad does and his wife.

4f

165 *How does Susan, your social worker think you are getting on at school?*

166 I don't know. I never really talk to her. I don't like her.

167 *Does she talk to school do you know?*

168 Yes she does

169 *How long has she been your social worker?*

170 Um, my social worker is off ill so she's covering up for her, since last year
171 some time

PHASE 5

5a

172 *The next bit Penny, I'd like to ask you about plans and dreams for the future.*
173 *Do you think about what might happen next year?*

174 Yes, get a job or stay on at school. I'm in year 10.

175 *What about GCSE's*

176 Yes, it does worry me but..

177 *How many are you taking?*

178 I've got 9, I think, I don't know

179 *What kind of grades do you think you'll get?*

180 I've got some A-Cs and some C's – E's

181 *Are they the predicted*

182 Yeah

5b

183 *What do you want to do when you leave school?*

184 I don't know yet. I haven't got a clue. Go into acting or something

5c

185 *And where do you see yourself Penny, say when you are 25?*

186 I haven't got a clue

187 *No thoughts at all, home, work*

188 Maybe have a flat or something, go to work

5d

- 189 *And I'm going to ask you now about other people, where they might see you if*
190 *you asked them, say in 20 years time where they might think you'll be. How*
191 *about Ms C?*
- 192 I've no idea
- 193 *How about your foster mum?*
- 194 Um, settle down by then
- 195 *How about Susan or Jo?*
- 196 I don't know them very well
- 197 *Mum?*
- 198 Wouldn't have a clue
- 199 *How about Dad?*
- 200 Dad would probably see me settled down and at work, working
201 *Any other sort of, interested adult, adult who might be interested in what's*
202 *happening with you?*
- 203 No
- 204 *Can I ask you a bit more about school Penny, you talked about your*
205 *behaviour, can you tell me anymore about that?*
- 206 It's not very good, I'm always bunking off school. And getting into trouble.
- 207 *Is that what happened this week? At reception I was told that you might not*
208 *be able to see me.*
- 209 Yeah, because I bunked yesterday, I bunked most of the day and I was very
210 rude to the teachers and I'd been to my foster Mum, arranged with my Head
211 of year and the key stage manager, that I'd be off school for the rest of this
212 week and I refused to stay off school so I went to school as normal and spoke
213 to the head and she said alright I can stay as long as I'm really good, but my
214 foster mum didn't know this and rang the school and asked me to go home.
- 215 *So what's happening now?*
- 216 I haven't got a clue. I get to stay here for the rest of the week, but my foster
217 mum will kill me.
- 218 *Why didn't she want you to come back to school?*
- 219 She said it's better if I stay at home because of my behaviour and I said no
220 I'm going to school. She said you'll make things worse and stuff. I said I'm
221 going to school cos it's the last week of term and I want to see all my friends
222 and I'm going to go. See you later and I just went.
- 223 *Do you get the bus or a taxi?*
- 224 Taxi?
- 225 *You'll have to be really good this week and you might get away with it.*
226 *Do you have a relationship with the head that you feel you can just go and*
227 *talk to her?*

228 Umm, yeah

PHASE 6

6a

229 *Well the last set of questions Penny, you've had lots of changes in your life*
230 *and lots of moves and some people would find that really hard, how would*
231 *you say you have coped?*

232 I've coped quite well, I think. Very well, I don't know. I've just got on with it

6b

233 *What's helped you?*

234 My Dad. Cos he's always there for me, he always comes to see me wherever
235 I am

6c

236 *Has there been anything that hasn't helped?*

237 Changing schools

238 *OK. That's all the set questions, Penny. But I just wanted to ask, and again if*
239 *you don't want to say anything or you don't know then just say. You said you*
240 *lived with mum and dad until you were 8 and then you went into care because*
241 *mum wasn't very well, did that happen very suddenly?*

242 Well, Mum was never well since she had me and she was a bit, I don't know,
243 well she wasn't well and then when mum and dad separated, she went
244 completely off the wall and weird until I was about 10 or 11 and I was put into
245 care. I lived there for quite a while.

246 *And how did she look after you in that time?*

247 Well, it wasn't really her looking after me, it was her parents. I was always
248 round their house.

249 *And is Mum aware of what's happening with you now and where you are?*

250 Yeah, I think she is, yeah

251 *Well that's all the questions, thank you for talking to me.*

Introduction

Having written up Study 2 (the interview study), it was felt by the researcher that the depth of some of the information gathered through the interviews was not reflected through the analysis presented. An alternative way of reporting the cases of two of the young people who gave particularly reflective narratives was sought. A case study approach was chosen as it was felt that it would offer the opportunity for reflection around the themes identified in Study 2, and for identifying interactions between factors encountered by those two young people in their lives. It would also provide an opportunity to explore in more depth the young people's views of their life experiences.

These two young people were chosen because of their skills in expressing themselves and their views in the interviews and because of their divergent experiences of both school and care. More detail about them is available in the interview transcripts in the Appendices. In the accounts, sub-headings are used to indicate important phases in the young people's lives, (e.g., Birth family, School Placement). Themes identified in Study 2 are highlighted in italics.

Case Study 1 "Len"

Len's birth family environment

Len's memories of his experiences within his birth family illustrate several of the themes identified in Study 2. He was born to *parents who struggled to recognise and meet his needs*, putting their own needs before those of their son. He recalls that his father was in prison and was uninvolved in his care and that his mother spent a lot of time either drunk or asleep. Len talked about getting himself ready for school, doing the shopping and cooking for himself and his mother and of getting himself to bed. Len talked about a specific incident which had stayed in his memory due to the fear which he had felt. This was when his mother was in labour with his sister and he remembered having to knock for the neighbours. Len was five years of age. Len then talked of caring for his younger sister, feeding her bottles of milk as she grew older as his Mother was still unable to provide that care for her children. Len experienced *parental absence and the lack of the provision of a safe environment* within his family. The level of care which he received, as described by him, was very poor. There was *alcohol*

abuse within his family and *child maltreatment in the form of neglect and emotional abuse*.

Len was able to talk quite dispassionately about his parents as if he did not quite see the lack of care as their fault even though he said that it seemed funny thinking of a child looking after grown adults. There was no talk of blame or anger.

Despite this family background, Len appeared to have a *positive view of school* as he *learned to read early* and was obviously motivated to get himself to school.

Experiences in foster care

Len was taken into care and went to live with foster carers although he was then physically abused, experiencing more negative and traumatic caring behaviours. His Nan found bruises over his body in the shape of belt buckles and he went to stay with his Nan on a short-term basis. He did not talk about his feelings around this, although it illustrates a concerning *lack of quality of care within a foster placement*. Len was then in a number of other placements, experiencing a *lack of continuity in care placements*. At least one of his placements was described very positively by Len and he talked about having maintained contact with the family. This was obviously an example of a more *positive quality of care within a foster placement*. Len continued to have *contact with his 'Nan'*. At this time Len was still in close *contact with his siblings*.

Experiences of adoption

Len and his younger brother were then adopted, Len's sister already having been adopted separately to her two brothers. The adoption was, for Len at a quite late age and unfortunately it did not appear to have been a positive turning point for Len. He talked of always feeling unhappy within his adoptive placement, of constant arguments especially between him and his adoptive mother, of her not liking him. Len talks about his adoptive father criticising his schoolwork and ripping it up because of untidy handwriting and making him do it again and again. This must have had an effect on his *view of himself as a learner*. Whilst reflecting on his experiences within his adoptive family, Len talked too of his unhappiness at the *lack of face to face contact he had with his birth parents*, despite being placed with his brother.

The 'new family' moved to Germany as Len's adoptive father was in the armed forces before returning to the United Kingdom for Len to start at secondary school. Len talked of the family attending the post-adoption centre in London and how helpful this was in terms of bringing out how unhappy Len was rather than hiding it and trying to cover things up. This openness and exploring of what was happening for Len and how he was feeling exhibits the theme of *coherence*, Len was supported in putting together what had happened to him, in the past and in the present and relating this to his feelings. He was helped to come to a view of himself and of his identity which may have proved the positive turning point for Len.

Len's adoptive placement broke down and he moved into residential care. His brother remained with his adoptive parents who he saw quite regularly, again *maintaining contact*. This ability for Len to maintain contact with important people may have proved to be another key positive factor for him, helping him to maintain that sense of identity. Len talked fondly of his adoptive Gran and cooking with her. His adoptive family were still very involved with him, were interested in this research, following his progress and liaising with school and his residential home.

Experiences in residential care

Len talked of feeling unhappy at first in residential care, of finding the environment upsetting and of the pecking order within the home's culture. Once he had established himself, and perhaps re-established his self-confidence and sense of identity, he felt more comfortable. He felt that having been within the home for the longest, he had gained the respect of other young people. The views of those young people were obviously important to him and to his sense of well being although he did not describe them as being so. Len said that he still felt upset at times.

Len talked positively about the personal *support he received in his care placement for his schooling*. He had a key worker and there was a member of staff with responsibility for supporting education and he also received support from her. He did feel slightly frustrated by the *lack of computing facilities within the home and the lack of books*. He felt that *most contact between his home and school was about checking up on him*, checking that he had told the truth. Len did however, appear to have a little of the fantasist within him (researcher's perception) as he talked of plans and dreams for the future which involved large sums of money, working in top hotels and also in talking of trips to Disneyland which his classmates were organising for him. There was an

element of immaturity in that Len was happy for the home and school to have this form of contact, it almost felt as if it added to his sense of security.

Len's school placement

Len's current *school placement appeared supportive*, in terms of his attainment and the teaching staff. Len had a key teacher who met with him on a regular basis and liaised with the researcher. This teacher appeared very motivated to support Len. He received *support from the Learning Support Department* within the school and from the designated teacher for children in public care. He had *continued in the same secondary school placement* despite moving to a residential home which was not local to the school and this continuity was seen as positive. Len did talk of being *bullied within the school*, of verbal abuse and some violence. He did have an unusual way of talking, babyish and slow yet in some ways he could appear quite patronising (researcher's perception). It was easy to see how he might be teased because of his mannerisms without the additional factors related to his home life. He said that he was being helped with friendships and to combat the bullying by the key teacher and he recognised that he was not the only young person in the school that was bullied. He did not relate it to a particular failing or weakness on his part.

The quality of Len's friendships, as he described them, came across as very mixed. He had one or two friends whom he had known for several years and with whom he had maintained contact. Yet, he talked more positively about his 'schoolmates' who, however, came across as classmates rather than friends. From his discussion about them, these 'friendships' felt superficial and circumstantial. Walking around the school with Len, everyone seemed to know who he was. He gained attention from lunchtime supervisors and older pupils alike. Whether Len's sensitivity in terms of how others see him and how they can threaten his identity, is felt by others as fragility resulting in a *lack of closeness by other young people* is possible. The researcher certainly felt that Len was almost desperate to be liked.

Len's strong relationship with his key teacher was obviously very supportive to him. He talked of the teacher helping him with peer group issues and clamping down on what had been going on in terms of bullying. He was obviously very motivated to be in school, said he was well-behaved and did not truant. Len did talk of teachers offering him support through 'time out' when he appeared upset so it may be that he did become upset in school. He was developing other involvements in school – athletics, encouraged by his key teacher.

Plan's and aspirations

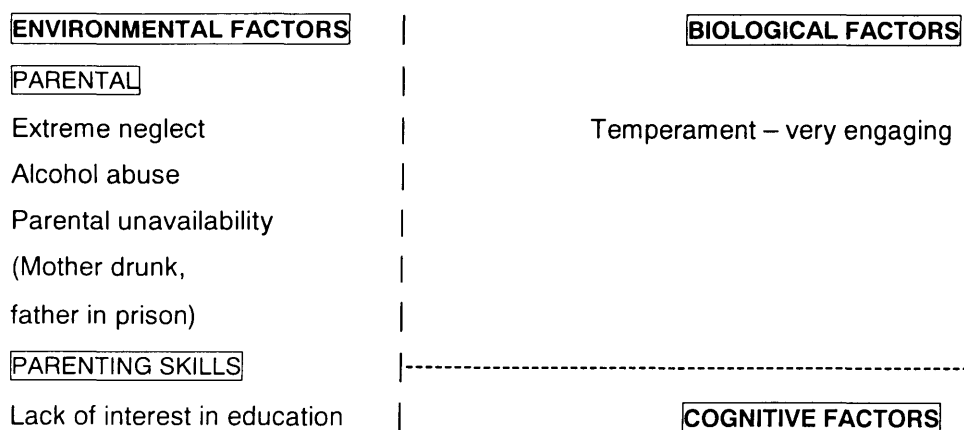
Len did have a vision of where he would like to be and what he would like to be doing when he is an adult. He had also carried out some research to find out about what he would need to do to get there. Some of Lens' plans were not perhaps very realistic.

Summary

Currently, for Len, school appeared to be a positive experience, especially in terms of the time invested in him by his key teacher and by key staff in the residential home around his education. Friendships and bullying were themes which arose for Len. His account of his experience felt quite isolating in terms of issues around repeated losses and maltreatment when he was younger. He did retain contact with his brother and with his adoptive parents. Len's story felt as if he had not quite fitted in or been truly wanted anywhere despite being a character of whom everyone seemed to have great fondness and to want to invest a great deal of time.

The view of himself which Len presented to an outsider and accounts of how others saw him felt distorted, although whether this was a protective mechanism was unclear. The things that he said do not really appear to reflect his true experiences. He felt quite emotionally detached and theoretical about his early experiences. However, currently Len is achieving well in school and this appears to be helping him to cope and move on.

Considering Lens' experiences using the causal modelling approach as described by Dent and Cameron (2003) (based upon Morton & Frith, 1995) to illustrate the presence and absence of risk and protective factors within his life.



| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| ?formative experiences? | | Attachments? |
| | | good cognitive skills |
| SOCIAL CONTEXT | | motivated to be in school |
| Currently secure school and | | desire to succeed |
| care placement | | protection strategies – defensive, |
| Support for education | | detached, unemotional |
| Peer group issues | | Issues re social competence |
| Bullied by others | | ----- |
| Adults interested in Len | | BEHAVIOURAL FACTORS |
| Lack of contact with birth | | Demanding on care staff and teachers |
| family | | Little or no physical aggression |
| History of other poor and | | No acting out behaviour – emotional |
| maltreating care placements | | responses |
| | | Good school attainments and |
| | | attendance |
| | | Future life opportunities?? |

There are some factors, for example, Len's quality of attachments, which cannot be commented on purely on the basis of the information gathered. Similarly the interviewing used did not really look at his formative experiences, apart from in relation to caring for himself, helping his mother when she was in labour and caring for his sister.

Reflecting on the above, the interaction between Len's engaging temperament and his supportive relationship with his key teacher and carers together with the security and stability of his current placements appear to be allowing him to 'blossom' and to give him time to deal with areas he still finds difficult. Len's own answer to the question about how he has coped with his experiences was to give a quote from his social worker which was that it was not his fault that he was in care. He appears to be using this removal of blame and philosophical approach to cope with all of the breakdowns which he has experienced. Len was the only young person who presented with an internal locus of control in the interview study when he completed the questionnaire (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). One can hypothesise that he is able to appropriately assign areas over which he has control and over which he has none in order to reflect and learn from his experiences.

However, he presented as a young man with issues around his identity formation and peer group relationships. His maintenance of contact with individuals important to him and his success in school may be supporting him in coping with these difficulties.

Case Study 2 – ‘Michelle’

Michelle's birth family

Michelle's experiences of care are quite different to those of Len. Michelle did not enter care until she was 15 years of age and did so in a crisis situation after asking for help herself. Michelle had lived within what sounded like a closed family system, (i.e. a very insular family system) for her early years with a strong and domineering mother who, from what Michelle says, had experienced her own difficulties in life. Michelle had four sisters, two older by her biological father whom she had never known and two younger by her stepfather. Her stepfather was the father figure for Michelle within the home. He was depicted as being hard-working and caring but not being 'emotionally available'. Michelle talked of pecks on the forehead and of her stepfather not really understanding her true dreams and putting her down, saying he wished she was more like her sister. Despite this she talked of him being the only one who understood her.

From Michelle's responses in the interview, her relationship with her mother had always been very complicated. Michelle felt clear about the type of relationship which she had always wanted and saw as being that of a normal mother –daughter relationship. She did not feel she had ever had this from her mother who came across as putting *her own needs quite clearly before those of her children*. Whether this was a true reflection of Michelle's relationship with her mother or not is difficult to surmise.

Michelle talked of *emotional and physical abuse within her birth family* and she talked of being cared for solely by her elder sister until her sister went into care. She then mentions babysitters and childminders. Michelle gives specific examples of her care, relating to being hit with a belt buckle, being thrown down the stairs so that she broke her arm, being strangled and being shut in her room with no food. She talked of the family being moved from one place to another as her mother got into trouble, resulting in the girls losing toys, friends and school attainments.

Eventually, she moved to live with her older sister, then returning home because she was so homesick. It is unclear what really happened during this period.

Schooling

Michelle had *many school placements* due to the *moves of house* and speaks quite negatively about the way that the schools listened to her complaints about her care at home. She did however speak fondly of her time in primary schools. This did not carry over into her secondary school experience. She felt negatively about her first secondary school as she felt that people only liked her because they liked her more popular older sister. She then went to live with her sister and attended what she described as being a very rough secondary school, before returning home and returning to her previous secondary school. There she became increasingly disaffected having few friends and getting into trouble with the one friend who she felt she could trust. She *truanted from school and was suspended*. Having said that, she had been identified as dyslexic and did receive *support from the Learning Support Teacher* who she praises.

Living with a friend

Eventually, Michelle did leave home and went to live with her friend. Unfortunately, the family with whom she then lived was also *abusive and Michelle was raped* repeatedly over a prolonged period of time by the older brother within the home. She talked of not being allowed out to school, of missing coursework, of losing a lot of weight, of self-harming and of being very traumatised and unhappy. Michelle said that her mother would not let her home and *refused her sisters contact with her* so that she was completely isolated. Michelle had been *let down by the one friend* she felt she could trust who had backed the brother rather than supporting Michelle in any way. This was a desperately unhappy time for Michelle, when having finally left her abusive family, she had to come to terms with the fact that she had left the people that she loved and was then let down and abused by the 'new' family.

Michelle recounted how she used a clever ploy to escape from her 'captor' and enter school, where she went straight to her Head of Year, who called social services and the police and it was at this stage that Michelle entered care.

Care

Entering care may have been the turning point for Michelle in giving her some protection and the space to begin to resolve some of her many issues from her childhood and from her time with her friends' family. Her care experience did not start

very happily as she found out that she was pregnant, had a termination on the advice of the adults around her, but at the time against her wishes. She told about how she then slept with lots of people to try and get pregnant again, fell in and out with her two consecutive foster carers and ended up attempting suicide before she was admitted to a psychiatric unit. From here she was quickly moved to another Unit and then into residential care. Michelle *talked about her residential home positively* although she talked of her own role within the home with some apology. She talked of being challenging and testing out adults to the point that some left. She talked of leading the other young people in this. However, eventually she reflected that she settled down and returned to education in the form of a training placement organised through her school. Since then, she had retaken GCSE's moved into independent living and had settled herself in a place from where she could move forward.

Summary

Michelle experienced abusive care both within her birth family and within her friend's family. She went through rape, pregnancy, a termination, self-harm and suicide before she finally received help and found a 'place' from where she could move forward. She presented to the researcher as superficially strong and being able to express what she felt she ought to say. How robust Michelle really was, was hard to judge. Contact with her siblings and other members of her birth family had been refused because of her mother and Michelle found this very difficult to cope with. She was hoping to restore contact with at least her younger sisters after she was interviewed. Her disaffection with friendships and with relationships generally was a key theme which she returned to and her view that people were only within friendships for their own benefit. She had had mixed experiences in schools and expressed a lot of bitterness against schools which would not listen, to her or to her sisters. She gave the impression of never really having settled into the life of the school having been transplanted and moved around so much as a child and with so much going on for her at home.

Considering Michelle's experiences using the causal modelling approach as described by Dent and Cameron (2003) (based upon Morton & Frith, 1995).

| ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS | | BIOLOGICAL FACTORS |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| PARENTAL | | |
| Emotional abuse | | Temperament – very engaging |
| Physical abuse | | |
| Parental unavailability | | |
| Position in family? | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| PARENTING SKILLS | |
| Extreme favouring of one daughter over another? | COGNITIVE FACTORS |
| Negative formative Experiences | Attachments? |
| | learning difficulties – specific? |
| | Issues – distorted view of friendships |
| SOCIAL CONTEXT | Desire to succeed |
| Adults interested in Michelle | protection strategies – blames mother, |
| Peer group issues | reflection on what she's already coped |
| Lack of contact with birth family | with – rape, abortion, attempted suicide |
| History of other abusive relationships including rape. | sense of wider family support |
| | |
| Poor school experience- didn't feel listened to | BEHAVIOURALFACTORS |
| Good school support for learning difficulties. | Demanding on care staff and teachers |
| | Could show aggression and acting out |
| | behaviour? |
| | Re-engaged with education |
| | Future life opportunities?? |

From Michelle's reflections about her childhood, it could be hypothesised that her early attachments and birth family experiences had had a very significant impact on her life. The psychological impact of the abuse which she had been subject to and the effect this had had on her self-image was profound. Her experiences at the hands of her friend's family had added to this and had also left her with, in the researcher's opinion, a rather distorted view of friendship which, perhaps, excluded her from another protective factor. Like Len, her experience felt very isolating. She had experienced rejection, loss and bereavement to extreme levels. Despite this, Michelle had moved on, was very proud of her flat and was determined to succeed, rightly or wrongly motivated by the desire to prove her mother wrong. She was aware of some of the issues which were still around for her and talked of wanting to spend some time 'sorting out her inside' so that she could begin to focus on what was happening for her in the future rather than always focusing on the past.

Issues arising from the case studies

Rutter (1987) suggests focussing on the turning points in people's lives and looking at how factors interact at those focus times. It is possible to hypothesise that for Len a key turning point was the breakdown of his adoption and his re-entry into care as this appears to have been the start of a more settled time for him, although difficult at first

settling into the residential home. For Michelle, it may have been the period of recovery after her suicide attempt, when having hit “rock-bottom” she was supported in re-building herself within the hospital placements, and within the residential home. Without more in-depth interviewing and without taking initial thoughts back to the young people and discussing it with them, any thoughts drawn out from the case studies are very hypothetical. However, the use of the causal modelling approach, although without causal links being made, does help the researcher in being able to see what might have been occurring in these young people’s lives.

The importance of **coherence** for young people is highlighted by these case studies. Young people who understand what has happened to them and why appear more likely to be able to develop a sense of identity and to see how others fit around them. They are able to see the meaning of different things and to understand their own particular context. If early life attachments are seen as playing a role in supporting children in developing a sense of identity and in reflecting on others’ behaviour, then young people who have experienced abusive caregiving relationships, who are more likely to exhibit insecure attachments are more likely to have difficulties in the area of identity formation.

Children who are then placed in care at a young age or without an understanding of why they have been removed from their families and who are then subject to moves from one family or home to another, again without due explanation are likely to have difficulties not only in forming attachments but also in developing a sense of that identity. This underlines the importance of ‘Life Story Work’ for children and young people, however hard it may be for a professional to engage in the work with a child. The time and effort needs to be taken to support these young people in having a true understanding of their life histories and of how and why they have reached the point where they are. Investigating whether using a resilience framework (in an age-appropriate format) to help them understand the importance of this and the importance of turning points in their lives may be a valuable piece of research to be undertaken.

Limitations of the case studies

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) outline the weaknesses of case studies. Case studies generally are recognised as having difficulties in terms of lacking generalisability, not being open to cross-checking and so suffering from the possibility of being selective, biased, personal and subjective. Difficulties are also discussed in

terms of the problems of choosing a sample – when is it fair to choose an exceptional case, and of presenting a fair and accurate account.

In this research, the case studies were written up as narrative accounts of information gained from interviewing young people and were not based on any other sources of information, for example, observation. This limits the breadth of information held about the young people. However, the benefit of this is that the account is, to some extent, open to cross-checking as the interview transcripts are available within this Appendix. The two cases were chosen to illustrate the sort of experiences that they young people had been through and to give the researcher and reader the opportunity to begin to explore how a richer picture could allow for a more detailed analysis of the interaction of factors and the importance of particular turning points for young people.

APPENDIX FOUR

MATERIAL RELATED TO STUDY THREE

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Appendix 4.1 | Table F: The make-up of the final data set for Study 3 |
| Appendix 4.2 | Outline of the changes made to Questionnaire A – resulting in Questionnaire C |
| Appendix 4.3 | Questionnaire C |
| Appendix 4.4 | Questionnaire D |
| Appendix 4.5 | Questionnaire E Revised Rutter Teacher Scale and scoring sheet |
| Appendix 4.6 | Questionnaire F Revised Rutter Parent Scale and scoring sheet |
| Appendix 4.7 | Questionnaire G Locus of Control Scale |
| Appendix 4.8 | Leaflet for young people about Study 3 |
| Appendix 4.9 | Results tables |
| | Table G: Protective factors for each case |
| | Table H: Risk Factors for each case |
| | Table I: Protective and risk factors totalled by environment |
| | Table J: Educational data |
| | Table K: Rutter Scale scores and Locus of Control scores |
| | Table L: Mean and SD scores for Locus of Control from Nowicki and Strickland (1973) |
| | Table M: Mean Locus of control for the whole sample |
| | Table N: Mean Locus of Control for the two groups |

Appendix 4.10

Information from questionnaires not used to address
research questions

Table O: Background information

Table P: Information relating to care

Table Q: Information relating to education

APPENDIX 4.1

Table F: The make-up of the final data set for Study 3

| Name | Age | Phase of schooling | Study recruited through | Interview (Int) or Questionnaire (Q) data |
|----------|-----|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Carla | 15 | Secondary (PRU) | Study 1 | Q |
| Tracy | 15 | Secondary (PRU) | Study 1 | Q |
| Kerry | 14 | Secondary | Study 1 | Q |
| Niamh | 15 | Secondary (Grammar) | Study 1 | Q |
| Johnny | 13 | Secondary | Study 2 | Int |
| Michelle | 17 | Secondary (training institution) | Study 2 | Int |
| Bobby | 15 | Secondary | Study 2 | Q and Int |
| Robert | 13 | Secondary (EBD Special) | Study 2 | Q and Int |
| Penny | 14 | Secondary | Study 2 | Q and Int |
| Len | 14 | Secondary | Study 2 | Q and Int |
| David | 15 | Secondary | Study 3 | Q and Int |
| Celia | 17 | Secondary | Study 3 | Q and Int |
| Jessie | 8 | Primary | Study 3 | Q |
| Josh | 8 | Primary | Study 3 | Q |

APPENDIX 4.2

Section1: Background Information

Question 4 asked the respondent when and why the young person was first taken into care.

Question 5 asked the respondent when the young person had been taken into care 'this time' and why, including details of their legal status.

Section 3 : Risk and Protective Factors

Question 9 was added which asked the respondent to rate how well the young person coped with being in care on a Likert-type rating scale of 1 to 8 where 1 is defined as "not at all well" and 8 is defined as "extremely well". The social worker was also asked to consider and include any particular factors which helped them to cope and any which might have hindered them in coping.

Section 5 : Miscellaneous Questions

Question 16 asked the social worker when the young person started reading and whether they enjoy reading.



**Young People in Public Care –
Research Questions for Social Workers**

This study is looking for factors which enhance the resilience of children in care and hence contribute to improved educational attainment, which as we know, is a key success factor for adult life. The research is looking at their experience of education, support for their education and also factors such as their pre-care experiences. This questionnaire is one of the vehicles for gathering this information and will sit alongside questionnaires from their designated teachers in schools and also in some cases, from my working directly with the young people themselves.

Please complete all of the questionnaire with as much detail and accuracy as possible. There may be some questions which are difficult to answer, for example if the child / young person does not have a school place. Some of the questions may also seem more relevant for older or perhaps younger children. However, I would be grateful if you could attempt to answer them all as accurately as possible. I hope that much of the information will be readily available to you, for example in the child's Personal Education Plan and in their LAC documentation and that you will find the structure of the questionnaire quite easy to fill in.

Many, many thanks for your contribution. Please do not hesitate to contact me on ... if you have any queries or concerns or if you have any useful suggestions for improving the questionnaire, particularly in relation to the ease of filling it in!

Susan Birch

Please complete - for admin use only:

Name of social worker:

Name of school:

Current care placement:

Background Information

1. **Date of Birth:**
2. **Gender:**
3. **Ethnicity:**
4. **When and why was the young person first taken into care?**

Date: **Reason:**

5. **Since when and why are they currently in care?**

Are they a) subject to a Care order: ICO / FCO
[Please delete]

Reason:

Or b) Accommodated: Requested by whom:

Reason:

6. **Placement history:**

| | Dates | Type of placement (foster care, home, residential home, home , relatives) | Reason for move |
|---|-------|---|-----------------|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |

7. Self-esteem

How would you rate the child / young person's global self esteem, where their self-esteem is a measure of how closely their image of themselves matches their 'ideal self'. Do they feel good about themselves or not?

1 is very low, the child / young person has a poor image of themselves and sees themselves as useless at everything. They may think that they are stupid, ugly, no-one cares for them and they may even self-harm. They may avoid tasks or becoming involved in relationships because they are so sure that they will fail or 'mess things up'.

3 is quite low. The child / young person may not think that they measure up to who they or someone else may like them to be, but they recognise that they are OK at some things.

6 is quite high, the child / young person feels quite good about themselves, perhaps in some areas rather than all and they feel that they can have a go at most things although they are not as good as... ..

8 is very high. The young person generally likes themselves and has the self-confidence to tackle all activities, realising that they won't be the best at everything and that that is OK. They understand that we are all better and worse at different things and that that is also OK.

PLEASE TICK

| 1 Very low | 2 | 3 quite low | 4 | 5 | 6 quite high | 7 | 8 Very high |
|---------------|---|----------------|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| | | | | | | | |

Comments:

8. Risk factors and protective factors:

Please rate the presence of the following in the child / young person's birth home environment as far as is possible:

1 is not at all relevant

3 is 'may have had some relevance'

6 is very relevant

8 is 'a crucial issue in the family'

[Please tick]

| Factor | 1 not relevant | 2 | 3 some relevance | 4 | 5 | 6 very relevant | 7 | 8 crucial issue |
|---|----------------------|---|------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Lack of parental education (e.g. didn't complete school, no qualifications) | | | | | | | | |
| Lack of parental interest in education | | | | | | | | |
| Alcohol abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Drug abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Parental mental illness | | | | | | | | |
| Parental divorce | | | | | | | | |
| Family illness | | | | | | | | |
| Bereavement | | | | | | | | |
| Sexual abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Physical abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Emotional abuse | | | | | | | | |
| Neglect | | | | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | | | | |

Comments:

9. Coping with being in care

a) How does the young person cope with being in care on a rating scale of 1 to 8, where 1 is “not at all well” and 8 is “extremely well” ?

b) Can you identify particular factors which

Help them to cope?

Hinder them in coping?

10. Social relationships:

Is the child / young person still in contact with their birth family? If so which members and how regularly? [Please tick and give details]

- ☐ Mother.....
.....
- ☐ Father.....
- ☐ Grandparents.....
.....
.....
.....
- ☐ Siblings.....
.....
.....
.....
- ☐ Other.....
.....
.....

11. Does the child / young person experience a close relationship with an adult other than their parent? [Please circle any applicable]

Grandparent / Aunt / Uncle / Foster carer / social worker / key worker
(residential)/ Teacher / Neighbour / Other

12. Was that relationship present and important to them before they entered care?

13. How well does the young person get on with other young people ?

1 is – “not at all well, there are lots of problems. I am very concerned”

3 is – “not great, he/she doesn’t seem to have many friends and there are some problems. I’m a bit concerned”

6 is – “quite well, he/she has quite a few friends and they seem to get on OK. I’m not particularly concerned”

8 is- “very well, he/she has lots of real friends, they go out of their way for each other/ play well together and I am not at all concerned about this area”

[please tick]

| | 1 not at all well | 2 | 3 some problems | 4 | 5 | 6 quite well | 7 | 8 very well |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| At school | | | | | | | | |
| In out-of- school activities | | | | | | | | |
| In their care placement | | | | | | | | |

Comments:

14. Does the child / young person have friends outside the care system who are successful in school?

Miscellaneous Questions:

15. What plans and hopes does the young person have for the future?

This summer?

Next school year?

When they leave school?

In the future?

16. Reading

a) When did the child learn to read? How old were they?

b) Does the child enjoy reading?

17. Homework

a) Does the child / young person have somewhere quiet to do their homework?

b) Do they have a regular slot to complete homework?

If so, how long do they have?

18. Does the child / young person have access to resources outside school, to:

a) To books?

b) To a computer?

c) Do they have a library ticket?

d) Other (please give details)?

19. Who goes to:

a) Parent's evenings?

b) Sports days?

c) School plays / musical activities?

20. Is there anyone apart from yourself, who is particularly supportive of this child / young person's education?

21. Does the child / young person have a school place? Yes / No

If not, do they have alternative educational provision – please specify

22. Does the child / young person have a Personal Education Plan?

23. Has the child / young person been excluded from school?

| | School Year / dates | No. days | Reason excluded | School |
|------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|--------|
| Fixed Term | | | | |
| Permanent | | | | |

24. What is the child / young person's previous school history?

Please include any pre-school experience, if known.

| School | Dates |
|--------|-------|
| | |

MANY THANKS



**Young People in Public Care –
Research Questions for Designated Teachers**

This study is looking for factors which enhance the resilience of children in care and hence contribute to improved educational attainment, which as we know, is a key success factor for adult life. The research is looking at their experience of education, support for their education and also factors such as their pre-care experiences. This questionnaire is one of the vehicles for gathering this information and will sit alongside questionnaires from their social workers and also, in some cases, from my working directly with the young people themselves.

Please complete all of the questionnaire with as much detail and accuracy as possible. Some of the questions may seem more relevant for older or perhaps younger children. However, I would be grateful if you could attempt to answer them all as accurately as possible. Please feel free to involve the child or young person's classteacher / form tutor in completion of the questionnaire. I hope that much of the information will be readily available to you, for example in the child's Personal Education Plan and in their school records and that you will find the structure of the questionnaire quite easy to fill out.

Many, many thanks for your contribution. Please do not hesitate to contact me on if you have any queries or concerns or if you have any useful suggestions for improving the questionnaire, particularly in relation to the ease of filling it in!

Susan Birch

For Admin use only, please complete:

School:

Name of designated teacher:

**Anyone else involved in completion
of the questionnaire, e.g. head of year (secondary):**

Background Information

1. **Date of Birth:**
2. **Gender:**
3. **Ethnicity:**
4. **School Year:**
5. **Educational Attainments:**

Please complete the following as fully and accurately as possible, appropriate to the age of the child. If the child is in year 10, please complete test results for all previous key stages:

| | | National Test results (SATs) | Optional test results | Teacher assessed levels (where relevant, e.g. if child missed test) |
|----|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 5a | KS1 Maths | | | |
| 5b | KS1 English | | | |
| 5c | KS1 Science | | | |
| 5d | KS2 Maths | | | |
| 5e | KS2 English | | | |
| 5f | KS2 Science | | | |
| 5g | KS3 maths | | | |
| 5h | KS3 English | | | |
| 5i | KS3 Science | | | |

5(j) Reading ages – please complete as available

| Date or chronological age | Test used | Standardised score (if available) | Reading Age |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

5(k) Spelling ages – please complete as available

| Date or chronological age | Test used | Standardised score (if available) | Reading Age |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

5(l) Other assessment results used in school:

6. Other attainments in school:

Please note any other achievements gained by the child / young person in school. If none, please write this in. If there has been a significant change over the last year, please note this.

| | Achievements |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Positions of responsibility | |
| sport | |
| music | |
| art | |
| dance | |
| Other | |

7. Special Support:

a) Does the pupil have

- ☐ A Statement of Special Educational Needs
- ☐ Individual Education Plan
- ☐ Pastoral Support Programme

□ Personal Education Plan

b) Has the pupil received support from the following:

[Please tick and complete dates where relevant]

| | This year | Previously (with dates) |
|--|-----------|-------------------------|
| Educational Psychologist | | |
| Learning Support Teacher | | |
| Teacher from Behaviour Support Team or outreach from Pupil Referral Unit | | |
| Place at Pupil Referral Unit | | |
| Member of Education of Children in Public care Team | | |
| Learning Support Assistant in class | | |
| Mentor | | |
| Youth Worker | | |
| Other | | |

8. Self-esteem

How would you rate the child / young person's global self esteem, where their self-esteem is a measure of how closely their image of themselves matches their 'ideal self'. Do they feel good about themselves or not?

1 is very low, the child / young person has a poor image of themselves and sees themselves as useless at everything. They may think that they are stupid, ugly, no-one cares for them and they may even self-harm. They may avoid tasks or becoming involved in relationships because they are so sure that they will fail or 'mess things up'.

3 is quite low. The child / young person may not think that they measure up to who they or someone else may like them to be, but they recognise that they are OK at some things.

6 is quite high, the child / young person feels quite good about themselves, perhaps in some areas rather than all and they feel that they can have a go at most things although they are not as good as... ..

8 is very high. The young person generally likes themselves and has the self-confidence to tackle all activities, realising that they won't be the best at everything and that that is OK. They understand that we are all better and worse at different things and that that is also OK.

[please tick]

| 1 Very low | 2 | 3 quite low | 4 | 5 | 6 quite high | 7 | 8 Very high |
|---------------|---|----------------|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| | | | | | | | |

Comments:

9. Social relationships:

How well does the child / young person get on with other children / young people ?

1 is – “not at all well, there are lots of problems. I am very concerned”

3 is – “not great, he/she doesn't seem to have many friends and there are some problems. I'm a bit concerned”

6 is – “quite well, he/she has quite a few friends and they seem to get on OK. I'm not particularly concerned”

8 is- “very well, he/she has lots of real friends, they go out of their way for each other/ play well together and I am not at all concerned about this area”

[please tick]

| | 1 not at all well | 2 | 3 some problems | 4 | 5 | 6 quite well | 7 | 8 very well |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| At school | | | | | | | | |
| In out-of-school activities | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| In their care placement | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Comments:

10. Does the child / young person have friends outside the care system who are successful in school?

Miscellaneous Questions:

11. What plans and hopes does the young person have for the future?

This summer?

Next school year?

When they leave school?

In the future?

12. Homework

b) Does the child / young person have somewhere quiet to do their homework?

b) Do they have a regular slot to complete homework?

If so, how long do they have?

13. Does the child / young person have access to resources outside school, to:

a) To books?

b) To a computer?

c) Do they have a library ticket?

d) Other (please give details)?

14. Who comes to:

a) parent's evenings?

b) Sports days?

c) School plays / musical activities?

15. Is there anyone who is particularly supportive of this child / young person's education?

16. Has the child / young person been excluded from school?

| | School Year / dates | No. days | Reason excluded | School |
|------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|--------|
| Fixed Term | | | | |
| Permanent | | | | |

17. What is the child / young person's previous school and pre-school history?

| School | Dates |
|--------|-------|
| | |

MANY THANKS

REVISED RUTTER TEACHER SCALE FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN



Child's name: _____

Age: _____

Class teacher / Head of year / Head teacher / Other (Please delete as appropriate)

Below are a series of descriptions of behaviour often shown by children. After each statement are three columns: *Does not apply*, *Applies somewhat* and *Certainly applies*. If the child definitely shows the behaviour described by the statement, place a cross in the box under column 3 *Certainly applies*. If this child shows the behaviour described by the statement but to a lesser degree or less often, place a cross in the box under column 2 *Applies somewhat*. If, as far as you are aware, the child does not show the behaviour, place a cross in the box under column 1 *Does not apply*.

Please complete on the basis of the child's behaviour *during this school year*.

Put *one* cross against *each* statement. Thank you.

This statement ...

1. If there is a quarrel or dispute will try to stop it
2. Very restless, has difficulty staying seated for long
3. Offers to share rulers, pencils, etc., being used in a task
4. Will invite bystanders to join in a game
5. Truants from school
6. Squirmey, fidgety child
7. Will try to help someone who has been hurt
8. Often destroys or damages own or others' property
9. Frequently fights or is extremely quarrelsome with other children
10. Not much liked by other children
11. Apologizes spontaneously after bad behaviour
12. Often worried, worries about many things
13. Tends to be on own, rather solitary
14. Irritable, touchy, is quick to 'fly off the handle'
15. Shares out sweets or extra food
16. Often appears miserable, unhappy, tearful or distressed
17. Has twitches, mannerisms, or tics of the face and body

| | Does not apply | Applies somewhat | Certainly applies |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. If there is a quarrel or dispute will try to stop it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Very restless, has difficulty staying seated for long | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Offers to share rulers, pencils, etc., being used in a task | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Will invite bystanders to join in a game | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Truants from school | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Squirmey, fidgety child | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Will try to help someone who has been hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Often destroys or damages own or others' property | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Frequently fights or is extremely quarrelsome with other children | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Not much liked by other children | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Apologizes spontaneously after bad behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Often worried, worries about many things | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Tends to be on own, rather solitary | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Irritable, touchy, is quick to 'fly off the handle' | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Shares out sweets or extra food | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Often appears miserable, unhappy, tearful or distressed | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Has twitches, mannerisms, or tics of the face and body | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



This statement . . .

Does not apply

Applies somewhat

Certainly applies

18. Stares into space, stares blankly
19. Frequently sucks thumb or finger
20. Is considerate of teacher's feelings
21. Frequently bites nails or fingers
22. Stops talking quickly when asked to
23. Tends to be absent from school for trivial reasons
24. Is often disobedient
25. Spontaneously helps to pick up objects which another child has dropped (e.g. pencils, books, etc.)
26. Takes the opportunity to praise the work of less able children
27. Inattentive, easily distracted
28. Excessive demands for teacher's attention
29. Shows sympathy to someone who has made a mistake
30. Cannot settle to anything for more than a few moments
31. Tends to be afraid of new things or new situations
32. Offers to help other children who are having difficulty with a task in the classroom
33. Fussy, or over-particular child
34. Often tells lies
35. Helps other children who are feeling ill
36. Has wet or soiled self this year
37. Has stolen things on one or more occasions in the past 12 months
38. Has a stutter or stammer
39. Has other speech difficulty
40. Can work easily in a small peer group
41. Unresponsive, inert or apathetic



Does not apply

Applies somewhat

Certainly applies

-

Date of completion:

Thank you for your help in this study.

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REVISED RUTTER TEACHER SCALE FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN



Scoring sheet

Instructions: Transfer the scores from the scale to this scoring sheet by circling the score indicated on the scale by the teacher. Sum the columns to obtain a total difficulties score and separate sub-scale scores. Remember to add the scores from pages 1 and 2 together.

| | Total difficulties | Emotional difficulties | Conduct difficulties | Hyperactivity/ inattention | Prosocial |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 2. | 0 1 2 | | | 0 1 2 | |
| 3. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 4. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 5. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 6. | 0 1 2 | | | 0 1 2 | |
| 7. | | 0 1 2 | | | 0 1 2 |
| 8. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 9. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 10. | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 | | | |
| 11. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 12. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 13. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 14. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 15. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 16. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 17. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 18. | | | | | |
| 19. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 20. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 21. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 22. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 23. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 24. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 25. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 26. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 27. | | | | | |
| 28. | | | | | |



REVISED RUTTER TEACHER SCALE FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN



Scoring sheet (continued)

Page 2

| | Total difficulties | Emotional difficulties | Conduct difficulties | Hyperactivity/inattention | Prosocial |
|-------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 29. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 30. | 0 1 2 | | | 0 1 2 | |
| 31. | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 | | | |
| 32. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 33. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 34. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 |
| 35. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 36. | | | | | |
| 37. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 38. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 39. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 40. | | | | | |
| 41. | 0 1 2 | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 42. | | | | | |
| 43. | 0 1 2 | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 44. | | | | | |
| 45. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 46. | | | | | |
| 47. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 48. | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 | | | |
| 49. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 50. | | | | | |
| 51. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 52. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 53. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 54. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 55. | | | | | |
| 56. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 57. | | | | | |
| 58. | | | | | |
| 59. | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | |



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REVISED RUTTER PARENT SCALE FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN



Child's name: _____

Age: _____

Below are a series of descriptions of behaviour often shown by children. After each statement are three columns: *Does not apply*, *Applies somewhat* and *Certainly applies*. If your child definitely shows the behaviour described by the statement, place a cross in the box under column 3 *Certainly applies*. If your child shows the behaviour described by the statement but to a lesser degree or less often, place a cross in the box under column 2 *Applies somewhat*. If, as far as you are aware, your child does not show the behaviour, place a cross in the box under column 1 *Does not apply*.

Please complete on the basis of your child's behaviour *during the past three months*.

Put *one* cross against *each* statement. Thank you.

This statement ...

1. Tries to be fair in games
2. Very restless, has difficulty staying seated for long
3. Considerate of other people's feelings
4. Squirmy, fidgety child
5. Often destroys or damages own or others' property
6. Has had tears on arrival at school or has refused to go into the building in the past 12 months
7. Will try to help someone who has been hurt
8. Frequently fights or is extremely quarrelsome with other children
9. Gives up easily
10. Not much liked by other children
11. Volunteers to help around the house or garden
12. Often worried, worries about many things
13. Tends not to finish things started, short attention span
14. Spontaneously affectionate to family members
15. Tends to be on own, rather solitary

| | Does not apply | Applies somewhat | Certainly applies |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Tries to be fair in games | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Very restless, has difficulty staying seated for long | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Considerate of other people's feelings | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Squirmy, fidgety child | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Often destroys or damages own or others' property | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Has had tears on arrival at school or has refused to go into the building in the past 12 months | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Will try to help someone who has been hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Frequently fights or is extremely quarrelsome with other children | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Gives up easily | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Not much liked by other children | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Volunteers to help around the house or garden | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Often worried, worries about many things | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Tends not to finish things started, short attention span | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Spontaneously affectionate to family members | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Tends to be on own, rather solitary | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Does not apply

Applies somewhat

Certainly applies

-



This statement ...

Does not apply
Applies somewhat
Certainly applies

42. Comforts a child who is crying or upset
43. Often complains of aches or pains
44. Is helpful with regular classroom tasks
45. Doesn't share toys
46. Cries easily
47. Settles down to work quickly
48. Has had tears on arrival at school or has refused to come into the building in the past 12 months
49. Fails to finish things started, short attention span
50. Will clap or smile if someone else does something well in class
51. Disturbs other children
52. Resentful or aggressive when corrected
53. Volunteers to help clear up a mess someone else has made
54. Bullies other children
55. Blames others for things
56. Gives up easily
57. Tries to be fair in games
58. Inconsiderate of others
59. Kicks, bites other children

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Completed by: _____

Date of completion: _____

Signed: _____

Thank you for your help in this study. _____

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REVISED RUTTER PARENT SCALE FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN



Scoring sheet

Instructions: Transfer the scores from the scale to this scoring sheet by circling the score indicated on the scale by the parent. Sum the columns to obtain a total difficulties score and separate sub-scale scores. Remember to add the scores from pages 1 and 2 together.

| | Total difficulties | Emotional difficulties | Conduct difficulties | Hyperactivity/ inattention | Prosocial |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 2. | 0 1 2 | | | 0 1 2 | |
| 3. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 4. | 0 1 2 | | | 0 1 2 | |
| 5. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 6. | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 | | | |
| 7. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 8. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 9. | | | | | |
| 10. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 11. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 12. | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 | | | |
| 13. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 14. | | | | | |
| 15. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 16. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 17. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 18. | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 | | | |
| 19. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 20. | | | | | |
| 21. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 22. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 23. | | | | | |
| 24. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 25. | 0 1 2 | | | | |



REVISED RUTTER PARENT SCALE FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN



Scoring sheet (continued)

Page 2

| | Total difficulties | Emotional difficulties | Conduct difficulties | Hyperactivity/inattention | Prosocial |
|-------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 26. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 27. | | | | | |
| 28. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 29. | | | | | |
| 30. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 31. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 32. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 33. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 34. | 0 1 2 | | | 0 1 2 | |
| 35. | | | | | |
| 36. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 37. | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 | | | |
| 38. | | | | | |
| 39. | | | | | |
| 40. | | | | | |
| 41. | 0 1 2 | | | | |
| 42. | | | | | |
| 43. | | | | | |
| 44. | | | | | |
| 45. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 46. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 47. | 0 1 2 | | 0 1 2 | | |
| 48. | | | | | 0 1 2 |
| 49. | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 | | | |
| 50. | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | |



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LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE FOR CHILDREN (LCSC)



Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Date completed: _____

We are trying to find out what young people think about certain things. We want you to answer the following questions about the way you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Don't take too much time answering any one question, but do try to answer them all.

One of your concerns during the test may be, 'What should I do if I can answer both yes and no to a question?' It is not unusual for that to happen. If it does, think about whether your answer is just a little more one way than the other. For example, if you would assign 51 per cent to 'yes' and 49 per cent to 'no', mark the answer 'yes'. Try to pick one or the other response for each of the questions and do not leave any blanks.

Tick yes or no next to each item. Thank you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you just leave them? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Do you believe that you can stop yourself from catching a cold? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Are some people just born lucky? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Most of the time do you feel that getting good marks at school means a great deal to you? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Are you often blamed for things that aren't your fault? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 6. Do you believe that if somebody studies hard enough, he or she can pass any subject? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7. Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out right anyway? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8. Do you feel that if things start out well in the morning, it is going to be a good day no matter what you do? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 9. Do you feel that most of the time parents listen to what their children have to say? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 10. Do you believe that wishing can make good things happen? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 11. When you get punished, does it usually seem it is for no good reason at all? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 12. Most of the time do you find it hard to change a friend's (mind) opinion? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 13. Do you feel that cheering, more than luck, helps a team to win? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 14. Do you feel that it is nearly impossible to change your parents' mind about anything? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 15. Do you believe that your parents should allow you to make most of your own decisions? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 16. Do you feel that when you do something wrong there is very little you can do to make it right? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 17. Do you believe that most people are just born good at sports? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 18. Are most of the other people your age stronger than you are? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |



19. Do you feel that one of the best ways to handle most problems is just not to think about them? Yes No
20. Do you feel you have a lot of choice in deciding who your friends are? Yes No
21. If you find a four-leaf clover, do you believe that it might bring you good luck? Yes No
22. Do you often feel that whether you do your homework has much to do with what kind of marks you get? Yes No
23. Do you feel that when someone your age decides to hit you, there is little you can do to stop him or her? Yes No
24. Have you ever had a good luck charm? Yes No
25. Do you believe that whether or not people like you depends on how you behave? Yes No
26. Will your parents usually help you if you ask them to? Yes No
27. Have you felt that when people were mean to you it was usually for no reason at all? Yes No
28. Most of the time, do you feel that you can change what might happen tomorrow by what you do today? Yes No
29. Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them? Yes No
30. Do you think that people can get their own way if they just keep trying? Yes No
31. Most of the time do you find it useless to try to get your own way at home? Yes No
32. Do you feel that when good things happen they happen because of hard work? Yes No
33. Do you feel that when somebody your age wants to be your enemy there is little that you can do to change matters? Yes No
34. Do you feel that it is easy to get friends to do what you want them to do? Yes No
35. Do you usually feel that you have little to say about what you eat at home? Yes No
36. Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there is little you can do about it? Yes No
37. Do you usually feel that it is almost useless to try in school because most other children are cleverer? Yes No
38. Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better? Yes No
39. Most of the time, do you feel that you have little to say about what your family decides to do? Yes No
40. Do you feel it is better to be clever than to be lucky? Yes No



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LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE FOR CHILDREN (LCSC)



Scoring key

Instructions: Place the scoring key over the questionnaire and sum the scores for the ticked responses in both columns to give a total score. A high score corresponds to a high external locus of control.

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|-----|---|---|
| 1. | 1 | 0 | 19. | 1 | 0 |
| 2. | 0 | 1 | 20. | 0 | 1 |
| 3. | 1 | 0 | 21. | 1 | 0 |
| 4. | 0 | 1 | 22. | 0 | 1 |
| 5. | 1 | 0 | 23. | 1 | 0 |
| 6. | 0 | 1 | 24. | 1 | 0 |
| 7. | 1 | 0 | 25. | 0 | 1 |
| 8. | 1 | 0 | 26. | 0 | 1 |
| 9. | 0 | 1 | 27. | 1 | 0 |
| 10. | 1 | 0 | 28. | 0 | 1 |
| 11. | 1 | 0 | 29. | 1 | 0 |
| 12. | 1 | 0 | 30. | 0 | 1 |
| 13. | 0 | 1 | 31. | 1 | 0 |
| 14. | 1 | 0 | 32. | 0 | 1 |
| 15. | 0 | 1 | 33. | 1 | 0 |
| 16. | 1 | 0 | 34. | 0 | 1 |
| 17. | 1 | 0 | 35. | 1 | 0 |
| 18. | 1 | 0 | 36. | 1 | 0 |
| | | | 37. | 1 | 0 |
| | | | 38. | 1 | 0 |
| | | | 39. | 1 | 0 |
| | | | 40. | 0 | 1 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Hello! | Susan Birch | County Council | |
| Thankyou for reading this. | Educational Psychologist | and | |
| | | University College London | |
| | And University College London | Being in care and in | |
| | Tel: | school | |
| | Email: | How can we make things | |
| | | better? | |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Hello! | <u>What will this involve?</u> | <u>What do I have to do?</u> |
| My name is Susan Birch and I am carrying out some research into what might make things better for children and young people in care, in school. | This will involve your social worker and a teacher in school answering some questions on a questionnaire about you and your experiences. No-one will know the answers are about you except them. I will know the answers, but won't know that they're about you. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nothing! If you don't want to. ▪ If you'd like to tell me about your experiences yourself ring me onor email me onto arrange a time to meet. I'll ask you to do some questionnaires with me too. A small gift will be available to thank you for taking part. ▪ Or if you don't want to be involved at all, ring me on the same numbers |
| We're thinking about what helps and what really doesn't help. | | |
| You have been chosen by your social worker to take part in the study. | | |

APPENDIX 4.9 Results Tables

Table G: Protective Factors

| Participant | Within child | | | Environment | | | | | | | | Total |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------|
| | | | | Pre care | | Care | | | School | | | |
| | Locus of control | Learned to read early | Plans and aspirations | Adequate parental care | Parental interest in education | Adult interested in education | Resources and place to do HMK | Successful friends not in care | Adult to talk to | Other achievements and involvements | | |
| Carla | ? | ? | No[0] | Yes[1] | ? | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 4 | |
| Tracy | ? | ? | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | ? | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 5 | |
| Kerry | ? | ? | Yes[1] | No[0] | ? | Yes[1] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 4 | |
| Niamh | ? | ? | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 4 | |
| David | External [0] | Yes [1] | No [0] | Yes [1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 7 | |
| Celia | Mean[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | 8 | |
| Bobby | Mean [0] | ? | Yes[1] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | 5 | |
| Len | Internal [1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | 7 | |
| Michelle | External[0] | No[0] | Yes[1] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 5 | |
| Robert | Mean [0] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 5 | |
| Johnny | External[0] | ? | Yes[1] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | 6 | |
| Penny | External[0] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 5 | |
| Jessie | ? | Yes[1] | n/a | ? | ? | Yes[1] | n/a | No[0] | Yes[1] | No[0] | 3 | |
| Josh | ? | Yes[1] | n/a | ? | ? | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | Yes[1] | 6 | |

Table H : Risk Factors

| Participant | Within child | | | Environment | | | | | Total | | |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | Poor social skills | Behaviour Difficulties | Low self-esteem | Pre care | | | Care | | | School | |
| | | | | Parents with mental health problems | Drug &/or alcohol abuse within the home | Child maltreatment | High number of placements | Residential care | | Excluded from school | Truancy / non-attendance |
| Carla | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | -5 | |
| Tracy | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | -3 | |
| Kerry | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | -5 | |
| Niamh | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | -1 | |
| David | Yes[-1] | Yes [-1] | No [0] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | -5 | |
| Celia | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | -2 | |
| Bobby | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | -7 | |
| Len | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | -5 | |
| Michelle | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | ? | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | -7 | |
| Robert | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | -7 | |
| Johnny | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | 0 | |
| Penny | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | No[0] | ? | -5 | |
| Jessie | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | Yes[-1] | ? | ? | ? | ? | No[0] | Yes[-1] | -4 | |
| Josh | No[0] | No[0] | No[0] | ? | ? | ? | ? | No[0] | No[0] | 0 | |

Table I : Risk and Protective Factors Table

| Subject | Protective | | | | Total Protective | Risk | | | | Total risk | Ratio |
|----------|--------------|-------------|------|--------|------------------|--------------|-------------|------|--------|------------|-------|
| | Within child | Environment | | | | Within child | Environment | | | | |
| | | Pre-care | Care | School | | | Pre care | Care | School | | |
| Carla | 0 | +1 | +3 | +2 | +4 | -2 | -1 | -1 | -1 | -5 | 0.8 |
| Tracy | +1 | +1 | +2 | +1 | +5 | -1 | 0 | -1 | -1 | -3 | 1.67 |
| Kerry | +1 | 0 | +2 | +1 | +4 | -2 | -2 | -1 | 0 | -5 | 0.8 |
| Niamh | 0 | 0 | +3 | +1 | +4 | 0 | -1 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 4.0 |
| David | +1 | +2 | +3 | +1 | +7 | -2 | -2 | 0 | -1 | -5 | 1.4 |
| Celia | +2 | +1 | +3 | +2 | +8 | 0 | -2 | 0 | 0 | -2 | 4.0 |
| Bobby | +1 | 0 | +2 | +2 | +5 | -3 | -2 | -2 | 0 | -7 | 0.7 |
| Len | +3 | 0 | +2 | +2 | +7 | -1 | -2 | -2 | 0 | -5 | 1.4 |
| Michelle | +1 | 0 | +3 | +1 | +5 | -2 | -2 | -3 | -2 | -7 | 0.7 |
| Robert | 0 | +2 | +2 | +1 | +5 | -2 | -1 | -2 | -2 | -7 | 0.7 |
| Johnny | +1 | 0 | +3 | +2 | +6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6/0 |
| Penny | 0 | +1 | +3 | +1 | +5 | -1 | -2 | -1 | -1 | -5 | 1.0 |
| Jessie | +1 | 0 | +1 | +1 | +3 | -3 | 0 | 0 | -1 | -4 | 0.75 |
| Josh | +1 | 0 | +3 | +2 | +6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6/0 |

Table J : Educational Data

| Subject | National Curriculum Levels – Test unless stated TA | | | Reading Ages | Spelling Ages | Other attainment data | Ever excluded from school (Yes or no) |
|----------|--|------------|------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Maths | English | Science | | | | |
| Carla | | | | CA: 16.1, RA 11.08(acc) RA 12.06(comp) | CA: 14.8, SpA 11.2 | | Yes |
| Tracy | | | | | | | Yes |
| Kerry | KS3 5 | KS3 5 | KS3 4 (TA) | | | | No |
| Niamh | KS3 5 (TA) | KS3 6 (TA) | KS3 5 | | | | No |
| David | KS3 N | KS3 3 | KS3 4 | | | CAT 80, VRT 84 | Yes |
| Celia | | | | | | GCSE's – 2C, 4D, 2F | No |
| Bobby | KS3 4 | KS3 4 | KS3 4 | | | | No |
| Len | KS3 5 | KS3 5 | KS3 5 | Year 7, RA 10.9 | Year 7, SpA 10.05 | | No |
| Michelle | | | | | | | Yes |
| Robert | KS3 3 | KS3 3 | KS3 3 | CA 12.0, CA < 8.0 | CA 12.0, SpA <7.0 | | Yes |
| Johnny | KS2 4 | KS2 3 | KS2 3 | | | | No |
| Penny | | | | | | | Yes |
| Jessie | KS1 1 | KS1 2 | KS2 2 | June 03 RA 7.3 | June 03, SpA 7.6 | | Yes |
| Josh | KS1 2 (TA) | KS1 2 (TA) | KS1 2 (TA) | CA 7.6, RA 8.1 | CA 7.6, SpA 8.1 | | No |

Table K : Scores for Questionnaires E, F (combined Rutter Scale Scores) and G (Locus of Control scores)

| Subject | Rutter Revised Rating Scale Scores | | | | Locus of control score |
|----------|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Total score | Emotional score | Conduct score | Prosocial score | Hyperactivity / inattention score |
| Carla | | | | | |
| Tracy | | | | | |
| Kerry | | | | | |
| Niamh | | | | | |
| David | SW 14 T 19 | 1 2 | 5 5 | 6 4 | 2 3 |
| Celia | | | | | |
| Bobby | SW 21 T 18 | 2 4 | 5 2 | 12 22 | 5 3 |
| Michelle | | | | | |
| Robert | SW 8 T 23 | 0 4 | 3 6 | 14 14 | 1 6 |
| Johnny | | | | | |
| Penny | SW 9 T 31 | 3 5 | 3 12 | 19 0 | 0 6 |
| Jessie | | | | | |
| Josh | | | | | |

Key:

SW = social worker

T = teacher

Rutter Scale

Rutter total score out of 52 (both parent / SW and teacher scales)

Rutter emotional score out of 10 (parent / SW), out of 8 (teacher)

Rutter conduct score out of 10 (parent / SW), out of 12 (teacher)

Rutter Prosocial score out of 20 (parent / SW), out of 40 (teacher)

Rutter Hyperactive / inattentive score out of 6 (both parent / SW and teacher scales)

Table L : Statistics for the Locus of Control Scale

Low score internalising, high score externalising

Means and standard deviations for selected age groups and sex groups from the original standardized sample (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973), reproduced from the Child Psychology Portfolio (REF)

| Age group | Males | | Females | |
|-----------|-------|------|---------|------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 13 | 13.15 | 4.87 | 13.94 | 4.23 |
| 15 | 13.81 | 4.06 | 12.25 | 3.75 |
| 17 | 12.48 | 4.81 | 12.01 | 5.15 |

Nowicki, S. and Strickland, B.R. (1973) A locus of control scale for children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 40, 148-154

Table M : Mean Locus of control for the whole sample in Study 3

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|---|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Locus of Control | 8 | 8 | | | |
| Valid N (listwise) | 8 | | 24 | 15.88 | 5.222 |

Table N : Mean locus of control for the two groups in Study 3

| | EDUCGRP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------------------|--------------|---|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Locus of Control | unsuccessful | 4 | 19.00 | 4.546 | 2.273 |
| | successful | 4 | 12.75 | 4.113 | 2.056 |

APPENDIX 4.10

Other information collected through questionnaires – not used in answering the research questions

Table O : Background Information

| Participant | Age | Gender | Ethnicity |
|-------------|-----|--------|-----------|
| Carla | | F | |
| Tracy | | F | |
| Kerry | | F | |
| Niamh | | F | |
| David | 15 | M | Whi Bri |
| Celia | 17 | F | Whi Bri |
| Bobby | 15 | M | Whi Bri |
| Len | 14 | M | Whi Bri |
| Robert | 13 | M | Whi Bri |
| Penny | 14 | F | Whi Bri |
| Jessie | 8 | F | MOTH |
| Josh | 8 | M | Whi Bri |

NB No data on Michelle or Johnny as Questionnaires were not completed about these young people.

Table P : Information relating to Care

| Participant | First taken into care | | Currently in care | Care status | No. care placements | Contact with birth family | Other important adults |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|---|--------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| | Age | Reason | Reason | | | | |
| Carla | 14 | Beyond parental control | | Accommodated | 2 | Mother Grandmother Siblings | Key worker in RCH |
| Tracy | 15 | Beyond parental control | | Accommodated | 1 | Mother Father (phone) Grandmother Siblings | Key worker in RCH |
| Kerry | 7 | Neglect | | FCO | ? "various foster carers and children's homes, not recorded. Now home" | Mother Father Siblings | |
| Niamh | 12 | Parents couldn't provide care | | FCO | 3 | Mother siblings | Foster carer |
| David | 12 | Breakdown between YP and father after allegation of SA towards younger half sister | Breakdown in relationship between YP and father | Acc | 3 | None | Foster carer, social worker, teacher |
| Celia | 15 | | | ?CO | 2 | Mother Father Grandparents Siblings | Boss Friends |
| Bobby | 2 | Neglect | Cannot be looked after at home | FCO | 7 | Mother – twice a year Siblings | No |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|----|----------------------------------|--|-----|----|------------------------------|---|
| Len | | | | | | | |
| Robert | 3 | Dad couldn't cope after Mum died | Father can't cope | Acc | 11 | Father Grandparents Siblings | Key worker in RCH |
| Penny | 10 | Beyond parental control | Beyond parental control & mother's mental health | Acc | 11 | Mother Father | Foster carer and Head of Year in school |
| Jessie | | | | | | | |
| Josh | | | | | | Nan | Foster carer |

Table Q : Information relating to Education

| Participant | No. school placements | Type of school currently attended | Special support in school | Statement of SEN | Personal Education Plan |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Carla | 3 | PRU | PRU | | Y |
| Tracy | 3 | PRU | PRU and Youth worker | | Y |
| Kerry | 2 | Local Upper | | | Y |
| Niamh | 2 | Local Grammar | LST years 7-9 within school | | Y |
| David | 4 | Local Upper | Previously anger management – none currently | | Y |
| Celia | 4 | Local Upper | | | ? |
| Bobby | 5 | Local Upper | LST | Yes – language and literacy | Y |
| Len | | Local Upper | LSA in class | | |
| Robert | 5 | Special day - EBD | LST, 3 lessons per week. Also support form EP, BST / PRU, LSA and Youth Worker | Yes - EBD | Y |
| Penny | 5 | Local Upper | None currently | | Y |
| Jessie | 2 | Local primary | EP, Behaviour Support teacher, LSA and ECPC support Teacher | | |
| Josh | | | | | |

**Professional Practice Assignments
Doctorate in Educational Psychology**

**Volume 2
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PEER MEDIATION

1. Aims and scope of this assignment

The aim of this assignment is to look at peer mediation, a particular approach developed to tackle bullying and poor social interaction within secondary upper schools in a Local Education Authority in England. The first section of the assignment will look at the context of the work, the reasons for it being developed and the practical work undertaken. The second section will describe the approach itself and then will pull together and critically review the limited literature relating to the development of this area of work in America. The difficulty finding literature evaluating peer mediation and in particular finding a structured approach to writing up and evaluating the work, will be highlighted. Finally, the assignment will consider the effectiveness of the work undertaken in the local authority and the difficulties in a) working with secondary schools already in challenging situations and b) the pattern of Local Education Authority Psychologists embarking on work without having researched the approach and considered in depth the most effective way to develop the work. The final section will consider how the approach can be used in schools and the value it has as an intervention which educational psychologists can promote in schools. The role of Educational Psychologists working with secondary schools and other agencies developing such an approach will be considered.

2. The context of the work

The project was developed as a joint initiative between two services working within education in a shire authority. A new Chief Educational Psychologist was promoting a drive towards multi-agency working, alongside leading on the development of 'High Impact Project' work within the Educational Psychology Service. High Impact Projects were pieces of work where the Educational Psychologists would bid for project time to deliver specific, focused and time-limited pieces of work, with schools and other agencies. Alongside the Educational Psychology Service, the Youth and Community Service were, at this time, developing their links with secondary schools and wanting a specific

focus for working more preventatively within school settings rather than being solely based in youth centres.

The partnership between the two services was developed with the rationale that both services could offer something valuable to the partnership. The Youth and Community Service would offer their knowledge and experience of developing training about a specific technique with groups of young people and the Educational Psychologists would bring an in depth knowledge of working in schools and of research and evaluation techniques.

With movements towards peer support and anti-bullying strategies underway in the Authority, it was felt that a project looking at developing peer mediation could have a significant impact in schools. Peer Mediation was chosen as a strategy for promoting conflict resolution and citizenship within schools, these being required as part of the delivery of the Personal, Social and Health Education Curriculum (DfEE, May 1999). The approach was equally relevant in terms of Circular 10/99, 'Social Inclusion: Pupil Support' (DfEE, July 1999 (10/99)) with it's emphasis on schools developing preventative strategies, particularly around bullying, strategies supportive of clear behaviour management, the contribution of pupils in re-inforcing school behaviour policies and the value of multi-agency teams in working alongside schools.

The Chief Educational Psychologist therefore asked for interested Psychologists to work alongside members of the Youth and Community Service to develop Peer Mediation Schemes with secondary schools. The final project team consisted of two Youth and Community Senior workers and three Educational Psychologists who were given an open brief to develop Peer mediation Schemes in secondary schools in Buckinghamshire.

Three initial planning meetings were held at monthly intervals, to put together the project outline and to decide what could be offered to schools. A time line for actions was also agreed. It was suggested that the Youth and Community Service would develop the training materials for the peer mediation project and the Educational Psychology Service would produce an Evaluation package. This decision was made on the basis of the strengths and experience which members of the project team, irrespective of profession, already had. Pilot

schools were identified and individual members of the two services were chosen to approach the suggested schools. Each project team consisted of a Youth Worker and an Educational Psychologist. The Educational Welfare Service was invited to join the project, but unfortunately time and other commitments prevented this.

2.1. Process

The following process was suggested and delivered:

Phase 1: Introduction to schools

- Letter to Headteachers with an introduction to Peer Mediation, a write up of a Peer Mediation project and an example of an application form for Mediators. (See Appendices 1 and 2);
- Telephone call from a member of the team;
- An initial meeting with each Headteacher to explore the feasibility of the school working with the team;
- Whole school staff meeting and meetings with school staff identified to work with the project team;
- Letter for the school to send to all parents introducing the project.

Phase 2: Establishment of the Project

- Talks in assembly to introduce the project and ask for volunteer mediators;
- Establishment of the group of Peer Mediators and administration (application forms - including parental signatures (see Appendix 2 for examples), finding a slot in the school timetable for training, and a room);
- Training with the peer Mediators (including a weekend residential);
- Discussion about carrying the project forward in individual schools.

Phase 3: Evaluation

This is described in detail below.

2.1.1. The Mediators

The project team were keen that Mediation should be open to any interested young person and that there should be a wide range of individuals with a mix of gender, disability, class and ethnicity. We felt that it was important that the representation amongst the Mediators should reflect the school community. We hoped that the project might bring marginalised pupils back into the system.

Both schools chose to invite recruits from year 9 [13-14 years] and year 10 [14-15 years] and, as outlined above, talks were given in assemblies. Young people were invited to approach a member of the school staff and application forms were provided asking for the young people's interests and their personal strengths and weaknesses. Both schools started with around 25 - 30 young people which naturally reduced to around 12 after the training and discussions of the way forward.

2.1.2. Evaluation

It was decided that both qualitative and quantitative data, looking at a broad range of indicators including whole school factors and the skills of the mediators would be collected. It was hoped that the quantitative data might show an overall effect of the intervention but quantitative data would also be valuable for future development of the initiative, for example, focusing on the views of the young people involved and any subtle changes in skills or attitude detected by school staff.

It was hoped that the Project might have the following effects:

- decrease the young people's perceptions of bullying and aggression within the school;
- promote a welcoming and nurturing ethos within the school;
- increase the mediators skills in the areas in which they were trained.

It was suggested that individual mediators might become more self-confident and that this might increase their involvement in leisure and other activities as well as performance in academic areas.

The following evaluation package was designed with collection of data planned before the training of the mediators (pre-measures) and a term after the mediators had been actively mediating within the school (post-measures).

Data collected:

| | Quantitative | | Qualitative |
|------|--|---|---|
| | Whole School | Peer Mediators Skills | |
| Pre | Life in Schools Checklist (2 form groups chosen randomly per year group) | Parallel forms prepared and given to: Peer mediators Parents Tutors | |
| Post | As above – same groups where possible | As above (including any other comments). Mediators also asked to give forms to 9 people they had mediated with (2 successfully, 2 unsuccessfully and 2 in the middle) | Mediators asked to keep an anonymous log of the situations in which they had acted as mediators. (Type and number of problem situations). |

- 1) The 'Life in Schools Checklist' is a questionnaire devised by Arora (Arora and Thompson, 1987) with 40 items asking pupils to say whether or not they have experienced positive or negative events as described in statements during the week preceding the completion of the questionnaire, more than once, once a week or not at all.
A Bullying and an Aggression Index can then be calculated. Sharp (1999) provides published data on the questionnaire alongside guidance on its interpretation and a photocopiable proforma.
- 2) The parallel questionnaire (see Appendix 3) was developed by the Educational Psychologists in the team and was based on the training

package and the skills in which the mediators would be trained, alongside some more general factors. The following five factors were chosen.

- Communication and assertiveness;
- Conflict resolution and problem-solving;
- Anger management;
- Academic and schoolwork;
- Leisure and other activities.

Four items were designed for each factor so that the questionnaire had 20 items in total. Pupils, parents and tutors were asked to rate each item from 1 to 6 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Unfortunately the time was not available to trial our evaluation materials prior to the project so that possible errors in questionnaire design and difficulties in administering the questionnaire had not been identified and planned for.

2.2. The schools

The two schools worked with are both secondary upper schools in more deprived areas of Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire operates a selective system of secondary education.

School 1 had recently had a new Headteacher and was keen to be involved. The school had around 665 pupils from years 8 - 13. The school had approximately 290 children on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register, 32 with statements of SEN. To provide a context for the children's skills, the percentage of children at the school achieving level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 English SATs in 2000 was 45.3% (compared to a county average of 74.8%.) The members of staff worked with were a Deputy Head teacher and a Year Head.

School 2 had around 620 pupils from years 7 - 13. The school had approximately 190 pupils on the SEN register, 20 with statements of SEN and the percentage of children achieving level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 English

SATs in 2000 was 42.3% (compared to a county average of 74.8%.) In this school, a Head of Year and a form tutor volunteered to work with the project.

Both schools were therefore small upper schools with a high proportion of children with special educational needs.

2.3. Results

Difficulties were encountered in both schools in collecting data which will be discussed in more detail below. This has meant that the evaluation data has not been collected.

School 1

Initial data was collected and the peer mediators received training from 2 Youth Workers as well as taking part in a residential weekend (evaluated informally by the young people as very successful). The second generation of mediators have now been trained and the Headteacher has reported a very positive effect on the school.

"The fact that we, as a school, were prepared to place our confidence in them (the mediators) seems to have increased their expectations of themselves in lots of ways, including the academic".

"Their team identity has helped them to develop on a social level".

"Their new self-confidence has inspired other pupils in their year group to think more highly of themselves. Even those who have not been trained have felt able to interrupt arguments amongst younger pupils and to discharge violence. They have sent a confident and trustworthy example to younger pupils."

(Headteacher, 2000)

The mediators in school 1 wore a different colour tie and had a room which was decorated during activities week, Summer 1999.

School 2

The mediators in school 2 received the peer mediation training from the youth workers. However, the school did not take up the offer of the residential

weekend and unfortunately the school staff involved in the project were not able to be involved after the initial training (one member of staff on maternity leave and the other for a promoted post). The project was struggling.

It was decided that the programme should be put on hold as although a new Head of Year came into post, many of the young people trained were then in year 11 and it was felt that with the pressures of GCSE's, it would be unfair to continue to look to them to develop mediation within the school.

This assignment will now go on to look at the peer mediation approach itself and at its theoretical background. The limited literature relating to the development of the work in schools in the U.S.A. will be reviewed before the assignment considers the effectiveness of the project work outlined in the preceding paragraphs in the light of the research evidence.

3. Psychological Theory and research

3.1. Peer Mediation – a general introduction

Peer mediation is one strategy designed to resolve interpersonal conflict in schools. It is “a communication process in which the individuals with a problem work together assisted by a neutral third party, to solve the problem.” (Schrumpf, Crawford and Bodine 1997, p.2) As suggested by its name, the mediator (the neutral third party) is one of the peer group and hence it involves pupils working alongside each other rather than relying on school staff for involvement. Conflicts might include situations such as arguments about places in the dinner queue, about who sits where in class, about who the pencil case belongs to, name-calling, not including other young people in breaktime activities or about arguments between parents or groups within the school.

Conflict resolution (of which peer mediation is one specific strategy) has become increasingly widespread within schools in the United States of America through violence prevention programmes. Roderick (1988) describes conflict resolution as “the fourth R” to be taught as an integral part of the school curriculum. He described how all students in Chicago’s public high schools took a course in ‘dispute resolution’ as part of their 9th / 10th grade work

in social studies. Morse and Ivey (1996) cite a survey of 700 school districts completed by the national School Boards Association, where 60% of the districts taught students conflict resolution and peer mediation skills. It offers students an opportunity “to learn how to deal with conflicts in alternative ways that lead to peaceful settlements of disputes rather than irreconcilable differences” (Benson & Benson, 1993, p.427).

This paper will go on to describe the development and principles of conflict resolution before going on to explore the body of research contributing to our knowledge about peer mediation and about developing such approaches within schools.

3.2. Conflict resolution

It is important for young people to develop skills in conflict resolution, because conflict, defined as “violent collision: a struggle or contest: a battle: a mental struggle” (Chambers English Dictionary, p.299, 1990) is something which is encountered daily in everyday life. Schools as large organisations involving many individuals working together are likely to be places where conflicts are occurring regularly, conflicts between pupils, between pupils and teachers, between teachers, between teachers and parents and so on.

Conflicts over *resources*, for example, over time, space, money, equipment or property are particularly common in school classrooms. For example, pupils may argue about their need for equipment (e.g. in practical lessons), the lack of space on a desk, their having missed five minutes at break time as an angry member of staff has given them detention or whom a particular pencil belongs to. In the author’s experience, teachers spend a substantial amount of their time dealing with such conflicts, both within and outside lessons.

Conflicts over *values*, (i.e. those involving people’s beliefs, priorities and principles) are difficult to resolve as people’s beliefs tend to be enduring, can be illogical and are rarely open to change through reasoning. Conflicts over values may be perceived as very personal and the individual’s sense of self and family may feel threatened (Schumpf et al, 1997). Conflicts over values in schools may relate to attitudes about ethnicity, culture, class, gender and

sexual orientation. These types of conflicts may arise in schools where, for example, children are talking about their families' culture and where different cultures might react in different ways. Children and young people may need to experience and to be taught to respect these differences in order to be able to contribute to an inclusive society, both within school and within the community more widely.

3.2.1. The development of conflict resolution

Conflict resolution evolved in the business world as part of the developing field of "management studies" approximately 70 years ago (Roderick, 1988). Roderick describes how Follett (1924), one of the first modern business consultants, advised managers about dealing more positively with interpersonal conflicts articulating the idea of "win-win" solutions. Win-win solutions are those where both clients involved in a conflict, reach solutions which are acceptable to them, rather than one winning and one losing (see below). Follett (1924) described how this could be achieved where those in conflict focused on finding ways to meet their underlying interests and needs rather than arguing about their comparative positions.

The field of conflict resolution has now grown into other areas, including education and the legal system. Roderick (1988) describes how frustration with the U.S. legal system, including the large number of cases in courts which did not necessarily need to be there, resulted in the ideas of conflict resolution being used in the community. Community mediation schemes were set up to resolve conflict between neighbours through talking rather than needing to go to court. Roderick emphasises the importance of the role of the Quakers in introducing conflict resolution into schools, beginning with the "Children's Creative Response to Conflict" in 1972. This programme began as a project working with inner city children in New York to teach them skills in conflict resolution and co-operation, but developed more widely when the School Initiatives programme was started. This programme introduced a model for student mediation schemes. Work continued with the production of a dispute resolution curriculum in Chicago (Einstein-Gordon, 1985) and the training of student 'conflict managers' in San Francisco. The use of conflict resolution in schools in the United States is widespread and increasing.

The win-win model of conflict resolution

The following diagram illustrates the possible results of conflict resolution between two parties. One party can win and the other lose, both parties can lose or both parties can win.

Figure 1: Follett's Model of Conflict Resolution

| | Win | Lose |
|------|------------|-------------|
| Win | Win / win | Win / lose |
| Lose | Win / lose | Lose / lose |

Two forms of conflict resolution are now outlined, (based on Schrupf et al, 1997). Destructive conflict resolution is where at least one party loses, and positive conflict resolution is where both parties win. The diagram will be referred to in order to aid clarity.

Destructive conflict resolution

People who want to remain friends tend to avoid conflict, withdrawing from the conflict and ignoring the uncomfortable situation as they want to accommodate each other and avoid unpleasantness. They therefore tend to seek compromise. This response is likely to lead to a short-term solution and end to the conflict, but in the long-term the people involved in the conflict are likely to feel anxious about the relationship, guilty and they will probably worry about whether the right thing was done. This type of resolution is described as a lose / lose situation as both parties have withdrawn and are unlikely to have had their needs met. Where one party accommodates to the other, i.e. one withdraws, one disputant will have their needs met (will win) and the other will not. This would be described as a win-lose situation.

Where people in conflict are adversaries, who are competitive and want to beat each other then confrontation is the likely method of resolving any conflict, for example with threats, aggression, anger, bribery or punishment. These strategies result in hostility, violence and non co-operation. The resulting solution is always lose / win, (i.e. one person will always win over the other).

Constructive conflict resolution

People who are able to look at the situation, to identify each other's needs and then negotiate and compromise using clear strategies of communication and problem-solving are more likely to resolve conflicts fairly and amicably. This approach tends to result in both parties' needs being met and in improved understanding of the problem situation. The result is a win / win solution being negotiated.

When we teach children conflict resolution skills, we are aiming to teach them the effective communication and problem-solving techniques used in positive conflict resolution so that the resulting solution meets both parties' needs and relationships are improved.

3.2.2. The development of personal conflict resolution strategies

Whether people have learnt constructive strategies to deal with conflict in their lives, will probably depend on their personalities, dispositions, the role models provided by their families, communities and those encountered in their schools. Cowie and Sharp (1996) outline how children learn to interact towards each other by engaging in shared activities, (e.g. play in nursery and in the home, engaging in shared household chores and in group work in school). They cite Laursen, who suggested that most adolescents do learn to manage conflicts in such a way as to minimise their disruptive effects. Soutter and Mackenzie (1990) note that responses to conflict will depend on the culture of the group involved. However, research has not been carried out into the implications of this for setting up mediation schemes within multi-cultural school settings and this would form an interesting area for future research.

Cowie and Sharp (1996) emphasise the important role that conflict can play in “maintaining and even strengthening” relationships. This is achieved through the processes which are required in order to reach the resolution of the conflict. The processes of communication about the problem, empathising with the other person and negotiating for positive outcomes require a depth of interaction and trust which will have a positive effect on the quality of the relationship. Johnson and Johnson (1995) highlight that conflicts can “increase achievement, motivation to learn, higher-level reasoning, healthy social and cognitive development and increase the fun students have in school” (p.64). They can “enrich relationships, clarify personal identity and promote resilience in the face of adversity” (p. 64). On what basis these judgements are made is unclear from the research paper although the benefits obviously sound impressive. Johnson and Johnson emphasise that it is the destructive management of conflict which is to be avoided rather than the conflict itself. Examples of the destructive management of conflict include those discussed above, where a win/lose or lose/lose outcome is achieved through parties avoiding confrontation or through violent and aggressive behaviour.

However, conflict can also be negative. Cowie and Sharp (1996) emphasise the negative role that conflict can play for individuals and groups where peers behave in order to hurt others, for example during episodes of bullying. The effect for the victim of such bullying episodes can then be increased where other children want to help, but do not know how, or where there is strong pressure from the peer group not to help. “The peer group is important to the young person and lack of acknowledgement or affirmation from that social group can lead to the internalisation of profound feelings of unworthiness, loneliness and despair”(p.7). Johnson and Johnson (1995) emphasise the in-school factors which can lead to destructive conflict resolution and violence, for example, failing academically, feeling isolated from peers and having low self esteem. Taught strategies such as peer mediation can offer the peer group a recognised, adult-supported and structured approach to helping peers in such difficulties.

3.2.3. Conflict resolution in schools

Johnson et al (1985) found that 90% of conflicts in America's primary schools ended up with one or both parties being injured physically or psychologically. This suggested that students would benefit from being taught ways of constructively dealing with conflict situations as they arose.

For young people in schools, there may be different and incompatible advice provided about dealing with conflict situations. Other young people and sometimes family members may be advising "hit them back" and the media may promote violence as a productive or amusing way of dealing with conflict (Soutter & Mackenzie, 1998). School staff are more likely to advise "walk away" or "ignore them". None of the above will help the young people involved to resolve the conflict positively or to learn from the situation (see Follett's model, p.7). When teachers become involved in resolving conflict, either pupil-pupil or pupil-teacher, sanctions are often initiated which again, tend to act as a punishment rather than incorporating any learning about ways to approach the situation in the future. Cowie and Sharp (1996) consider the difficulties of punishing "wrongdoers", in terms of the feelings of resentment engendered, the behaviour becoming more entrenched and the pupils who tried to solve the problem being labelled as "grassers".

The disciplinary system within the school will make an important contribution to whether a conflict resolution programme will be successful. Schrumphf et al (1997) suggest from their work that the school ethos needs to :

- Be co-operative rather than competitive;
- Value diversity – showing respect, tolerance and appreciation of difference;
- Have a style of teaching good behaviour rather than punishing students in order to gain compliance;
- Have a clear behaviour policy with expectations for good behaviour consistently enforced;
- Have expectations for behaviour which make sense, so that good behaviour can be generalised into other situations and into society;

- Have disciplinary measures which offer pupils the chance to consider and evaluate their own behaviour and generate alternative choices.

3.3. Peer Mediation in more detail

Mediation involves a person acting as a neutral third party who facilitates problem-solving between people in conflict to help them negotiate an agreement. This individual (the mediator) needs to create an environment in which there is mutual respect and where problem-solving can occur. The mediator controls what happens, but not the content of what is agreed. Those who brought the conflict to mediation, control what is discussed and have the power over whether an agreement will be reached. If it is clear that they do not want to do so, then the process will not be effective. Mediators will need to be good at listening to both parties' view points and ensuring that they listen to each other. They need to be able to identify what each disputant really wants from the situation - what is really underlying the conflict, and creating options which address the needs of both parties. They then need to be able to evaluate these options against objective criteria, helping the disputants to reach an agreement and agree an action plan. Morse and Ivey (1996) and Lane and McWhirter (1992) suggest that peer mediators work in pairs rather than individually, in conducting mediation sessions. This is so that they can offer each other support, have time to reflect and generate a wider number of solutions. Schrupf et al (1997) give examples of the kinds of problems brought to mediators, for example, rumours, misunderstandings, bullying, fights, the misuse of personal property and the ending of friendships .

3.3.1. Why Peers?

Peer support strategies are becoming increasingly popular in schools in the U.K. with systems for peer mentors, tutors and for peer support in social situations, (e.g. "Guardian Angels" to pick up isolated children at play times, "Bus stops" where children who want to play can be picked up and buddying systems.) Often older pupils will be attached to a younger form group to act as a mentor or buddy. However, in the experience of the author, these older pupils are rarely provided with any 'training' or support in this role and the

success of the scheme often appears to depend on the personalities of those involved.

School staff can express concern about pupils being involved in helping others in this way, either as it is 'preventing them with getting on' or it is 'too much responsibility for pupils of a similar age'. Cowie and Sharp (1996) discuss this issue in regard to peer counselling where similar concerns had been encountered. Examples of concerns in these cases included "these pupils are too young to understand complex emotions", "what about confidentiality" and "It takes years of training and experience to do this work" (p.1). However they answer some of these concerns through emphasising the fact that "when we are in difficulty, it is to peers - people of a similar age group or those who have shared similar experience - that we often turn initially for help, support and understanding. Peers share with us a distinctive history and a particular social context". They also emphasise that adults often underestimate how good young people are at empathising with one another's suffering and at offering helpful support and guidance. Van Beest and Baerveldt (1999) highlight that "early adolescents attach more importance to acceptance by peers and increasingly turn to them for advice and comfort" (p.194). There are also the advantages of young people using more appropriate language and contextual frames, having an opportunity to discuss issues away from any judgements which they may see as being made by adults in positions of power or responsibility. Morse and Ivey (1996) describe how pupils in schools with peer mediation programmes "feel that they have more of an active, powerful role as part of the school community and are more motivated to become responsible, committed members of their peer group and school" (p. 79).

3.3.2. The structure of peer mediation

Peer mediation has a clear structure. Different authors present slightly different models but they all incorporate the same steps as described below in Schrumpf et al's model (1997).

Step 1:

This involves the parties reaching an agreement that they want mediation followed by an introduction to the process of mediation, including the definition and the agreement of rules. These rules may include that the content of the mediation is confidential to the group unless it constitutes risk to any young person's personal safety, that everyone will listen to each other and will not interrupt, that everyone will agree to follow up actions and to meet back to review the mediation.

Step 2:

The views of those in conflict are sought by the mediator and concerns and feelings are recognised and discussed openly. The mediators need to be able to separate the people from the problem and manage any emotions which are brought out by the discussion, for example suggesting that people take some time to cool down or that people note down some key points. It is also critical that they understand that what the 'disputants' describe as having happened are their perceptions of what happened rather than "the truth" and it may be that the group never need to discover the 'truth' in order to resolve the conflict. The Mediators must also understand that people are likely to have strong feelings about the conflict and that these will influence what they say and do.

Step 3:

After hearing the viewpoints of both parties, the mediators help those in conflict to focus on their interests – what they really want and why and then for both sides to focus on shared or compatible interests which may offer the focus for possible solutions.

Step 4:

Possible solutions to the problem are then generated. This requires the mediators to be creative and to encourage those in conflict to be creative. All possible solutions, even those which appear ludicrous are listed. The mediators need to ensure that none are ruled out prematurely, that at this early stage the group search for a single answer or that the group worries about solving the problem.

Step 5:

The mediators then lead the group in evaluating the options generated using objective criteria. A decision is made about which solution will offer the most chance of a win / win solution?

Step 6:

An agreement is created where each party will agree to an action which will generate the chosen solution.

3.3.3. Training peer mediators

Working as a mediator, as can be seen above, can be complex and requires many skills. Many young people will already have a wide selection of skills, although others will need to be taught these as part of their training in peer mediation. It is clear that some of the skills are specific to mediation whereas others are more general and will benefit the young people in all areas of their lives.

If we consider the skills required to deliver a peer mediation session, we can see that the mediators will need to be able to know and be able to follow the structure of the mediation session, managing the process and recording actions agreed. They will need skills in problem-solving and evaluating possible solutions and in establishing trust and respect within the group. They need to have an understanding of conflict and how it can arise, recognising and managing emotions and possibly most importantly, good communication skills. These will include verbal and non-verbal communication skills, including the use of questioning and eye contact, active listening skills, summarising, clarifying, reframing and negotiating.

Different programmes for training peer mediators vary slightly although they all cover a central core of skills as outlined above. Morse and Ivey (1996) suggest a package of 15 – 20 hours of training covering the following:

- foundation skills of mediation (exploring what conflict and violence mean to the group);
- practising active listening;

- discussing, demonstrating and practising other communication skills;
- the steps of the peer mediation session.

Training is delivered to the mediators by someone with the appropriate expertise and involving the member of staff from the school who will be co-ordinating the project. If older pupils in the school are already trained, they may also take part in the training.

Training may occur on two levels – basic training for the skills necessary for mediation followed by a more advanced training to consolidate skills learned, to increase fluency of skills and to practise mediating in more difficult and complex situations including groups.

The curriculum is usually delivered in a Circle Time type approach (Mosley, 1996) where pupils and trainers work within an open circle so that everyone is seen as equal. Ground rules are set, for example, that everyone will listen when someone else is speaking, that everyone will take a turn and that there is mutual respect within the circle. Discussion and role play are used centrally alongside worksheets and work books (depending on the scheme.)

Where the mediators being trained are having difficulty in gaining the basic skills, it may be advisable to offer training as befrienders first so that pupils gain skills in communication and assertiveness before going on to learn the more complex skills of negotiation and conflict resolution required for peer mediation.

3.3.4. Setting up a peer mediation scheme

Setting up a scheme such as peer mediation requires a school with the time, will and ability to change. The school will need to develop an ethos where peace-making is promoted and differences are respected and encouraged. The scheme will require input from school staff who are willing, interested and able to use conflict resolution themselves. Projects are also likely to be more successful where there is support from parents and the community so that a similar approach can be mirrored outside the school environment.

In practical terms a member of staff is required to co-ordinate the programme, and to train and support the young people on an ongoing, regular and unconditional basis. There needs to be agreement about a space which can be used by the young people as well as time when they can carry out mediations or gain support if this is required.

Practical steps

- A project co-ordinator needs to be selected to facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of the process within the school.
- The co-ordinator must also attend the training programme with the pupils so that they can develop the practical procedures and co-ordinate the future support for the group (Morse and Ivey, 1996)
- Sessions for staff, pupils and parents need to be planned and held to explain what mediation is and why conflict resolution is important.
- The selection of the peer mediators needs to be planned and co-ordinated including the use of application forms and contracts. Morse and Ivey (1996) underline the importance of a cross-section of the school community being selected as mediators, as conflicts occur across the whole community. Schools may be tempted to select the most able pupils but Morse and Ivey (1996) emphasise that there are 3 key qualities more associated with success as a Mediator. These are willingness to learn, good verbal skills and having the respect of the peer group. Lane and McWhirter (1992) suggest that "troublemakers" can be as enthusiastic and competent at mediation as those thought to be more ideal students. Cahoon (1988) notes that more academically proficient pupils do not always make good mediators. She recommends that selecting pupils who have difficulties making friends can be very beneficial as the problem-solving supports them in making friends themselves. Soutter and MacKenzie (1998) suggest that boys might be more reluctant to engage in mediation than girls – therefore schools may need to focus on how to encourage boys to engage. Price and Jones (2001) engaging in setting up a peer counselling scheme in a secondary school also found that the response from boys wanting to be involved was poorer than from the girls.

- Training of peer mediators (see earlier) – both initial and ongoing training needs to be planned, delivered and evaluated. This must include agreement over the types of conflict to be mediated and discussion about confidentiality and privacy within mediations and when this might have to be broken (e.g. child protection issues).
- The scheme needs to be publicised within the school so that pupils know how, where and when the mediators work.
- Supervision needs to be agreed and set up for the peer mediators.
- Evaluation – e.g. of each mediation session, of the mediators skills, data about the number of mediations requested, the types of conflict brought to mediation and the outcomes of the mediation sessions is required so that the benefits of the scheme can be seen and any improvements required can be identified.
- Parental permission should be sought for pupils to be able to train as mediators. Schools may also need to consider how to deal with parents who do not want their children to receive mediation or who are then concerned about staff not being involved as they might have been traditionally.
- It is helpful if there is curriculum support for the programme – e.g. specific modules on conflict resolution in P.S.H.E., setting up discussion groups with opposing sides of debates in subject lessons, debating forums.

3.4 The benefits of using peer mediation in schools

Various studies have looked at the benefits to schools of having peer mediation programs, although currently most of these studies are in the United States and seem to focus on the benefits to the Mediators and to staff, rather than looking at more general effects in terms of improving school ethos or reducing bullying.

Schrumpf, Crawford and Bodine (1997) conclude from their work in setting up peer mediation schemes in schools that it can show a number of benefits.

- It provides an opportunity for pupils to approach problems in a logical way;

- It provides a constructive way of resolving conflict - it promotes learning about the effect our behaviour has on other people;
- It improves the skills of the mediators themselves;
- It raises the self-esteem of the mediators;
- It is more effective than sanctions at teaching responsible behaviour - through the discussion of feelings, values and others perspectives;
- It decreases the time teachers spend in dealing with conflict.

Lane and McWhirter (1992) carried out reviews of the benefits of peer mediation and reported a list of 21 benefits as compiled by program trainers across 70 schools in the USA (Terros, 1988). These included, improvement in school climate, improvement of the mediators academically and families reporting improved self-discipline at home. However, again, these are reports from those involved. There is a lack of empirical evidence and quantitative analysis of the outcomes of this work which draws only on the perceptions and attitudes of those involved. This pattern is seen with a great deal of the research in this area and there appears to be a lack of structured and objective evaluation of specific programmes. One of the studies which Lane and McWhirter cite is McCormick (1988) who reported that students frequently referred for behaviour problems were “observed by teachers to exhibit shifts to co-operation after experiencing peer mediation” (p.17). McCormick reported a 47% decrease in self-reported aggressive conflicts which occurred as a result of peer mediation programme intervention. He also found a differentiation in the level of ‘prosocial’ attitudes toward conflict, observed in “at risk students who directly participated in the programme” compared to those who had only indirect exposure. Whether the decrease in self-reported aggressive conflicts is directly attributable to the peer mediation or whether the students were less likely to report aggressive conflicts having been exposed to the peer mediation strategy is unclear. The exact nature of the ‘shifts to co-operation’ and exactly what was observed by the teachers is again not expanded upon in this review and although it may be detailed elsewhere, it contributes to the ‘woolly’ nature of the research evidence.

Benson and Benson (1993), in their introduction to the review of Schrupf and Crawford’s peer mediation program, reported research carried out by

themselves with the National Association for Mediation Education. Peer Mediation was found to decrease the time which teachers and administrators spent working with conflicts, it decreased violence and crime in the school, it increased the grades, self-esteem and attendance of the mediators who learned life skills such as problem-solving, communication and critical thinking. They emphasise the philosophy of peace and the pupil's ownership of the program being of more importance in producing wider effects within the school environment compared to simply teaching pupils mediation strategies which they can use amongst their peers. However, Benson and Benson do not provide detail in this paper about this research and about how outcomes were measured. This prevents clear comparison of the research with other studies and prevents replication of the study.

Araki, Takesita and Kadomoto (1989) suggested in their study that peer mediation increased the "empowerment and volunteerism" of students (as cited in Lane and McWhirter, 1992). Disputants in this study who had poor listening skills improved their skills through involvement in the programme. Araki et al's study provides evidence of a program contributing to a reduction in the number of events in school requiring disciplinary procedures. Over a 2 year period, the number of on-campus fights dropped from 83 to 19. This last piece of evidence does appear more conclusive in terms of objectivity and not depending on student and teacher perceptions. However, whether one can ever truly indicate that a specific strategy has itself influenced a measure such as number of on-campus fights over a two year period is unclear. Detailed analysis of other factors which may have changed, e.g. intake of students, the introduction of a different timetable or the appointment of a new Pastoral Headteacher, would need to be undertaken.

Cahoon (1988) describes a program which was set up in a school with the aim of decreasing the amount of time teaching staff were spending dealing with discipline problems. A peer mediation scheme was chosen to help students solve minor disputes in the playground. Cahoon describes the program which involved every classteacher choosing two pupils to act as mediators within their classroom every two weeks. The selected pupils would then attend sessions with the principal at breaktimes to revisit the school rules and to learn about a simple script for mediating. Cahoon reports a reduction in the number of

discipline problems referred to the Principal's office as small problems were more likely to be dispersed before they needed this level of attention. She said that school personnel benefited from fewer interruptions and mediators benefited from improved skills. Cahoon highlights the importance of mediators as peer role models who provide constant, on-the-spot training for their peers.

Johnson and Johnson (1995) conducted 7 studies in 6 different schools with students from 1st to 9th grades in order to collect evidence to validate the approach. They found that "most" students a) who had daily conflicts, b) used destructive strategies and c) referred problems to teachers; after training, could apply negotiation and mediation procedures and could transfer the skills to non-school settings. How these were measured is not described in detail and the proportion making up "most" is not specified. Trained students were found to choose a problem-solving negotiation strategy rather than a win-lose approach, in contrast to the untrained students. Again, these were not illustrated or quantified. The trained students performed higher on achievement tests about a novel being studied in their English lesson, than students in the control group who spent their whole time studying the novel. Whether the students' prior performance and skills in English were controlled for is not stated. The number of conflicts which teachers were called to assist with dropped by 80% and the number of referrals of conflict to the principal was reduced by 95%. Johnson and Johnson therefore conclude that the school discipline system had changed its focus from discipline to supporting peer mediation. This would certainly be a very positive finding for the work if it could be fully validated.

Soutter and MacKenzie (1998) were involved in a project involving 15 comprehensive secondary schools set up in 1994 and evaluated in 1997. Soutter and MacKenzie carried out evaluation interviews of staff, parents and students; analysed records of mediation and gave out questionnaires in 34 of the project and 3 matched control schools. The questionnaires showed that project schools reported less disputes as a result of fighting, less disputes being resolved by disciplinary warnings and less students reporting avoidance as a way to resolve disputes than the control schools. The interviews revealed a number of positive effects. Peer mediation provided an alternative method for resolving disputes, increased awareness of the nature of disputes, their

consequences and how they could be resolved. The more in-depth nature of this evaluation and the design of matching the project schools with control schools provides a more robust indicator of the success of the peer mediation program. The use of questionnaires alongside individual interview also provides a more all-round evaluation, incorporating more subjective alongside objective measures.

In the projects described by Soutter and Mackenzie, only a small group of students were trained although students in general reported that the schools developed conflict resolution skills. Soutter and MacKenzie conclude from this that “mediation permeates the culture of the school”. They suggest that students pick up skills through observing other students and teachers using positive conflict resolution strategies. Johnson and Johnson (1995) however, reported that training a small team of students to manage conflicts and be peer mediators would not change how other students manage conflict. They suggest that a school must teach all students mediation and negotiation strategies in order to effectively put change in place. Further research to study the totality of effects where only a small number of mediators are trained would be interesting for the future. Looking at a slightly different spreading effect of teaching peer mediation skills, looking at individual mediators using their skills in alternative settings, Lane and McWhirter describe a ‘Ripple effect’ whereby advantages are felt at home as well as at school. They report that parents and students report that conflict in the home is resolved in new and more productive ways.

4. Integration of theory, research and practice

Looking at the research evidence about the effectiveness of peer mediation programmes in schools in the U.S.A., the unstructured nature of the majority of the programmes or the lack of detail in reporting the work which was done leads the author to consider that more objective and focused evaluation for this work is required. The majority of evaluations carried out include recording in changes in the number of events and in reports about improvements in a number of areas, from staff and pupils involved in the work. There appears to be little research looking at the wider effects of developing a peer mediation scheme on the school ‘culture’ or climate. It would be valuable to study more

general effects of peer mediation programmes in terms of empowering changes in school ethos, reductions in bullying behaviour and subsequent effects on whole school outcomes. This would be particularly beneficial in terms of strategies to support school improvement where Ofsted are now evaluating Educational Inclusion as well as the more traditional factors of raising standards and quality of teaching (Ofsted, 2001). Cowie and Sharp (1996) describe approaches used for evaluating alternative peer support strategies, including an anti-bullying strategy by Eslea and Smith (1995). Eslea and Smith looked at the impact that the strategy had on attitudes to bullying in a small number of primary schools through using targeted questionnaires, pre-intervention, immediately post-intervention and then a year later. They were able to show a consistent increase in positive social attitudes in the schools studied. Cowie and Sharp emphasise the importance of attempting to measure changes in social attitude and responsibility as a more value-added form of intervention of such work, alongside measuring levels of problem behaviour such as bullying. This may run alongside self-report measures where participants evaluate how well the programme met aims and objectives and alongside case study reports.

In addition, issues such as the setting up of programmes in multicultural settings and the engagement of males are areas which would seem very interesting for developing research.

4.1. Evaluating practice

Evaluation of the research carried out in the shire authority proved particularly challenging and in fact failed. The schools did not complete the data collection and the pupils did not keep the regular diaries requested. A number of constraints were identified which affected the collection of data and hence the project outcomes:

Timing

The time taken for the scheme to get going and the effect that this had on collecting evaluatory evidence (year 11 were on study leave in school 1 when data was required).

Ownership

The programmes were never truly owned by school staff but were seen as special projects, involving a small proportion of the school and remaining the responsibility of the Youth Workers who were delivering the training in the school. There was a clear lack of commitment to evaluation of the project, especially in school 2 and this is a factor which needs to be taken forward. Again, the author felt that this was a reflection of the school's lack of ownership of the project and the school seeing it as the youth workers project.

Changes of school staff

This was very problematic. Both members of staff in both schools either left or changed positions. This lack of continuity was a major factor in not being able to collect the data and also in keeping the fluency of the work. This had an effect on the return of the questionnaires to the project team as at least one set appeared to have gone astray between members of staff.

Physical environment

The mediators in school 1 had their own room which became, for a time, a common room which it was feared other pupils would feel too intimidated to enter in order to receive mediation input.

Mediators skills

A lack of basic skills of the mediators. The youth workers delivering the training found that more time was needed to discuss communication, assertiveness and life skills before any mediation training could be initiated.

Quality of the evaluation materials

The parallel questionnaires were completed pre- training in school 1. The pupils tended to be rated as "good – excellent" across all of the items, by tutors, themselves and parents. However, this contradicted the observations of the Youth Workers delivering the training who found that, as described above, the pupils lacked basic social and communication skills. Further work therefore needs to be done on the development of such a questionnaire in terms of providing more objective and possibly, realistic baseline data for measuring increases in mediators skill levels. Pure academic data would have provided more rigorous data about any academic improvements, rather than including

this measure within the questionnaire. A pilot should be conducted of any further questionnaire to establish whether it provides a useful tool prior to the study.

Developmental stage of the school

It may be that the schools identified were not developmentally ready or able to take on a project requiring such ownership and commitment by the staff. School 1 has since the project entered Ofsted's special measures. The school is currently struggling to make adequate progress against its Ofsted Action Plan and a number of staff have left the school due to low morale. Where a school is finding it difficult to meet the basic requirement of delivering a good quality education and supporting its pupils in their social and emotional development, it may be that a project such as this, requiring a clear organisational structure, ownership by the whole school and community and a clear commitment to supporting the young people, is too complex.

4.2. Lessons learned from reviewing the literature

As suggested at the beginning of the paper, practising within a local Authority, a Psychologist working under pressure may start a project such as that described in the paper without a structured review of the literature and due consideration to setting up a project. Price and Jones (2001) describe a similar difficulty in their account of setting up a peer counselling service in a secondary school, where the school staff had been wanting a practical response to bullying and research had not been intended. The school's link psychologist was not involved by the school and the academic psychologist who was involved only became so through hearing about the project towards the end of the first school year. There was therefore a lack of base-line data.

However, having completed the practical work and having reviewed the literature, a number of important issues arise which suggest developments prior to further work.

1. Evaluating the choice of school more carefully – both in terms of the developmental stage of the school and also in terms of the school's culture. The importance of the school's behaviour policy in terms of

'disciplinary versus punishment' (Schrumpf et al, 1997) was not considered in the enthusiasm of finding schools who were willing and keen to take part.

2. Gaining more support from the whole school. Although presentations were made to whole staff meetings and in assemblies, there was a feeling that this was an isolated project, taking part in years 9 and 10 for a small group of young people and not that it was a new strategy being developed within the whole school. The lack of ownership of the projects by the schools, was a major issue, which although recognised and discussed as a risk before the work, was not effectively tackled. Stoll (1999) in considering working with schools to support them in improving, draws the conclusion that real improvement can only come from within schools, where the complex web of values and beliefs, social and power relationships and emotions are interacting, affecting the approach that staff take to any new initiatives. Reynolds (1996) also emphasises the need for the staff to have ownership of any change attempts and raises the question that less effective schools may have difficulty in engaging with activities brought to them by 'outsiders'. More recently, we have been approached by a third school wanting to develop peer mediation and a different model was used. Inset was delivered to the whole pastoral team in the school, including in-depth and open discussions about what the project might look like in the school. This highlighted issues about staff having ownership of the programme and looking at their whole school ethos. Involvement of the Senior Management team was felt to be crucial. After the initial session, the staff team therefore approached the Headteacher for clarification of his aims for peer mediation in the school. An agreement was reached, including a job description for a co-ordinator and the school, rather than a project team, were then able to move forward more productively.
3. Involving parents and the community so that the young people involved in mediating were not just involved in mediation once a week with the Youth worker training them, but were fully supported both at home and around the rest of the school.

4.3 The role of Educational Psychologists

Educational Psychologists are well-placed within the Authority to establish this type of approach, working in a multi-agency manner alongside other professionals who may have more time and flexibility to work within the schools in developing the schemes. Our skills within education services as researchers and the role that these can play within schools are underlined by the account of the development of the peer counselling scheme by Price and Jones (2001) where no baseline data was collected and research had not been intended until the involvement of a psychologist. Unfortunately in this case the school's link Psychologist was not involved.

One of the areas identified in the document researching the current role, good practice and future direction of educational psychology (Kelly and Gray, 2000) was that users of Educational Psychology Services would like more preventative work and an increased proactive role in multi-agency work. More specifically, early intervention and work focusing on social inclusion were identified. Again, the development of peer support strategies, including peer mediation and conflict resolution would seem to fit well into this brief. Currently in many services there appears to be a pressure that Educational Psychologists time is biased towards assessment of individual children, especially in schools where there are a number of children with special educational needs including behavioural problems. To encourage schools to step back from wanting their educational psychologist to assess individual children and to take on a wider view of the EP role, is a commonly encountered factor in our schools. The report also outlines the difficulties facing services with respect to resources and recruitment and the resulting pressure to meet statutory requirements further adds to the difficulty in encouraging more whole-school work.

The developing contribution of educational psychology to school improvement and the support of schools through project work may provide an identified time when whole-school work is seen as a priority over involvement with individual children. The need for schools to be evaluated by Ofsted for their educational

inclusivity may also provide stimulus for schools to look at external support services for support in developing and evaluating such strategies.

With the knowledge of working with school systems, of the vulnerability of young people in our schools, and the knowledge of child development, particularly social and emotional, we have a great deal to offer such schemes.

5. Concluding Comments

Evaluation of the literature and theory underpinning peer mediation suggest that it is a valuable intervention with positive effects for the mediators themselves, as well as reducing the time spent by staff dealing with disciplinary problems. However, further, more challenging research is needed to provide evidence about why and how it is effective. It seems particularly timely in 2001 in light of the social inclusion agenda, anti-bullying policies, the Government target for Local Authorities to reduce exclusions, whole school improvement and the ideas of teaching young people citizenship.

Goleman (1994) in his best-selling novel "Emotional Intelligence" includes conflict resolution and details peer mediation as one of the core skills to be taught to children to promote their emotional literacy. It is through this too, that Brighouse and Woods (1999) discuss the promotion of a positive ethos and building self-esteem as a strategy for creating school improvement through the raising of children's achievement and the enhancement of the school's ability to teach successfully. Peer mediation is a scheme which, the research suggests, promotes self-esteem, promotes a more positive school culture and teaches communication skills alongside the skills of managing emotions. Whether it can therefore lead to recognised and measured school improvement is a question still to be answered.

Conducting action research of such schemes has been a time-consuming and costly process. The constraints discussed above have made the collection of evaluation data virtually impossible, especially in terms of the changes of staff. However, the positive comments received and the enthusiasm of the mediators themselves are highly encouraging in developing the work. The experience of the youth workers who trained the young people, was that the mediators

themselves were young people with limited skills and self-confidence, who required the support and constancy of such a structured group. This led us to re-evaluate the aims of the programme and to encourage schools to consider befriending schemes in year 7 before going on to teach mediation skills as an advanced course, once young people had practised their basic skills.

Apart from the project described above, the project team also delivered a short presentation to the EPIT conference (UCL, 1999) and the Buckinghamshire Bullying Conference at Green Park in March 2000. Requests for INSET from the EPS have been received from a Grammar School and another Upper School. Members of the Youth and Community Service are currently delivering mediation-type training and PSHE conflict resolution work in three other schools in Buckinghamshire.

Finally, the value and pleasures of working closely with both schools and with other services must be emphasised. The skills and flexibility of the youth workers in delivering training with the young people together with the research skills and knowledge of working with whole schools, of the Educational Psychologists, resulted in a close-knit, focused and supportive team. In future the key staff from the schools should be included within this cross-county team to try and establish ownership and drive within the school setting.

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APPENDIX

1. Peer Mediation Project – introductory letter to Headteacher and example of a peer mediation project.
2. Example of an application form for peer mediators.
3. Example of the parallel questionnaire used in the project.
4. Example of handout for INSET on Peer Mediation and materials for Peer Mediators

APPENDIX 1

Dear Headteacher

RE: PEER MEDIATION PROJECT

Further to our telephone conversation, I enclose further details and a suggested outline of the Peer Mediation Project.

You will be contacted in the week beginning to discuss the feasibility of setting up such a project within your school. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us if there are any issues you would like to discuss.

Yours sincerely

PEER MEDIATION

1. What is peer mediation?

- The principle of peer mediation is to enable pupils to befriend other pupils and help them find ways of solving problems
- It can be used as an initiative against bullying
- It is also a way of creating a positive ethos by developing a feeling of security and minimising anxiety for younger pupils.

2. Why peer mediation?

- Research has shown us that peer mediation is one of the most effective ways of addressing young people's issues
- It promotes personal development.
- It is recognised in government initiatives such as Millennium Volunteers and Citizenship.
- It offers school staff and students opportunities to develop skills in:

Communication
Conflict resolution
Problem solving
Anger management
Assertiveness

3. Who is involved in the project?

The project is a joint initiative between the Youth and Community Service and the Educational Psychologists

4. Which schools have been approached?

You are one of the 4 secondary schools across Buckinghamshire which have been approached on the basis of their current relationship with the Youth service and their responsive whole school approach.

5. What is the aim of the project?

To set up, monitor and evaluate a peer mediation scheme which is individual to the school.

To devise a peer mediation pack which could be used as a resource by other schools in Buckinghamshire.

6. What could the school be offered?

- Initial meeting to discuss the concept of peer mediation and how it could be adapted to meet the needs of the school and to identify key personnel to develop the process.
- Staff meeting where key school personnel in partnership with the pilot team outline the suggested project.
- Assembly to explain the project to the target group selected to be mediators.
- Approximately 6 training sessions for peer mediators.

- Ongoing support for peer mediators and link members of staff.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the project through data collection.

7. What would the school contribute?

- Identify a member of staff as project co-ordinator
- Identify a small number of staff members who would be willing to act as mentors to the peer mediators
- Provide a venue for the project team to run the training sessions
- Once scheme is in place, the staff mentors would take over the running of the mentor support meetings.

8. How does a scheme like this work in practice?

There have been several initiatives similar to the one we are proposing and a summary of such a project is set out below.

Example of a peer mediation project set up in a large comprehensive school

Reasons for setting up the project:

- The school decided to set up the project as part of an initiative to help them address the issue of bullying.
- The school already had an anti-bullying strategy in place but felt that they wanted to do more to support the younger pupils.

Setting up the project

- A whole staff meeting was held to explain the initial idea.
- A working party was formed to plan the project.
- Year 10 pupils were used as befrienders for year 7 pupils
- The year 10 befrienders were called 'Guardians'

The role of the guardians

- To befriend the younger pupils
- To listen to the younger pupils
- Their role was not to 'sort out' bullies but to encourage the younger pupils to go and tell a teacher.
- If the younger pupils lacked the confidence to do this, the Guardian could support them in a number of ways, for example, offering to go with them, or rehearsing with them what they were going to say.

The process:

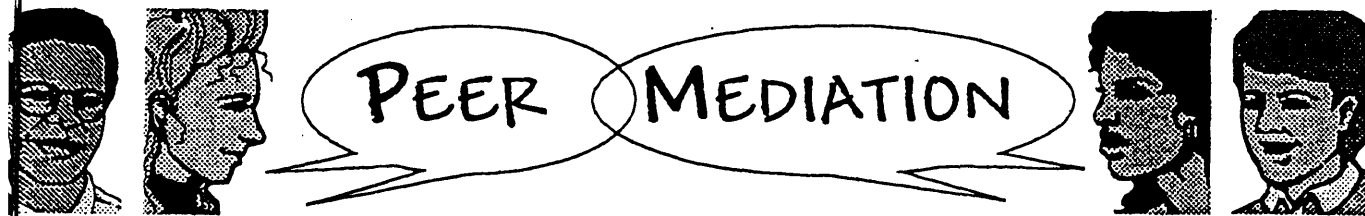
- An assembly was held to explain the project to the year ten pupils and they were asked to volunteer as Guardians, by filling in an application form.
- Once the Guardians were selected, they attended series of lunchtime training sessions on issues such as:
Their role

Listening and questioning skills

Building rapport with younger pupils

The sorts of issues with which they could help and which should be passed on to teachers.

- A group of Guardians were allocated to each year 7 tutor group and went in once a week to get to know the pupils in the class.
- If the year 7 pupils wanted to talk to the Guardians, they could either approach them during the class session or during the breaks.
- Eight members of staff acted as mentors to the guardians and ran weekly meetings where the Guardians could discuss any issues which had come up.
- The staff mentors were also available to talk with Guardians on an individual basis if this was necessary.



DO YOU FIT THIS DESCRIPTION?

- ✓ you're a good listener
- ✓ other students trust you
- ✓ you're committed to helping other students
- ✓ your attendance record is excellent
- ✓ you're always punctual
- ✓ you treat people with respect

COULD YOU DO THIS JOB?

Mediators help students find solutions to problems they're having with other students. For example the problems could be about bullying or people falling out with each other.

They do this first by listening to both sides of the story. Next by making it possible for the students involved to come up with ideas about how they can solve the problem.

WE NEED MEDIATORS FROM YEAR 10. IF YOU THINK YOU COULD DO IT, ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS AND BRING THIS FORM TO THE YEAR 10 OFFICE

Name _____ Form _____

What skills have you got which would make you a good mediator?

.....
.....
.....

What experiences have you had of people bullying each other or falling out with each other?

.....
.....
.....

In what ways do you think the mediation service is good for the school?

.....
.....
.....

What do you think you would get out of being a mediator?

.....
.....
.....

Peer Mediation Assessment Form

Peer Mediators (Pre)

Below are a list of statements about different skills and activities. Please think about each of these areas and decide where you would place yourself on a scale of 1 to 4 and circle the appropriate number.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am good at listening carefully to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I can negotiate with others when I don't agree with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I am pleased with my contribution to class discussion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I know when I am feeling stressed and angry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I take part in school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I can summarise things that people say to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I can listen to two sides of an argument without taking sides | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I get good results in my schoolwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I am good at controlling my temper | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I go out regularly after school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I feel comfortable making eye contact with people when I talk with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I am good at knowing how people are feeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I always do all of my classwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I can walk away from difficult situations when I feel angry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I enjoy out of school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| In a group I can make my own opinions heard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I am good with coming up with ideas to solve problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I complete all of my homework to a good standard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I do not take my anger out on others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I am helpful around the house at home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Thankyou for completing the above

Peer Mediation Assessment Form

Form Tutors (Pre)

Below are a list of statements about different skills and activities. Please think about each of these areas and decide where you would place the peer mediator on a scale of 1 to 4 and circle the appropriate number.

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| He/she is good at listening carefully to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she can negotiate with others when he/she doesn't agree with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she contributes well to class discussion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she recognises his/her own feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she takes part in school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she can summarise things that people say | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she can listen to two sides of an argument without taking sides | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she gets good results in schoolwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she can control his/her temper | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she goes out regularly after school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she makes appropriate eye contact with people when he/she talks with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she is good at knowing how people are feeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she always does his/her classwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she can walk away from difficult situations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she enjoys out of school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| In a group he/she can make his/her own opinions heard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she is good at coming up with ideas to solve problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she completes all of his/her homework to a good standard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she does not take his/her anger out on others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| He/she is helpful at home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Peer Mediation Assessment Form

Peer Mediators (Post)

Name:

Form:

Below are a list of statements about different skills and activities. Please think about each of these areas and decide where you would place yourself on a scale of 1 to 6 and circle the appropriate number.

| | Strongly disagree | Mostly disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Mostly agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| I am good at listening carefully to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I can negotiate with others when I don't agree with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I am pleased with my contribution to class discussion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I know when I am feeling stressed and angry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I take part in school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I can summarise things that people say to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I can listen to two sides of an argument without taking sides | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I get good results in my schoolwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I am good at controlling my temper | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I go out regularly after school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I feel comfortable making eye contact with people when I talk with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I am good at knowing how people are feeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I always do all of my classwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I can walk away from difficult situations when I feel angry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I enjoy out of school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| In a group I can make my own opinions heard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I am good at coming up with ideas to solve problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I complete all of my homework to a good standard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I do not take my anger out on others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| I am helpful around the house at home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Thankyou for completing the above

Did you find the Peer Mediation training useful ?

What were the best aspects of the training ?

Which parts of the training could be improved and how ?

Did you feel supported in working as a Mediator ?

If not, how could this be improved ?

Any other comments ?

Peer Mediation Assessment Form **Form Tutors (Post)**

Name:

Form:

Below are a list of statements about different skills and activities. Please think about each of these areas and decide where you would place the Peer Mediator on a scale of 1 to 6 and circle the appropriate number.

| | Strongly disagree | Mostly disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Mostly agree | Strongly agree |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| He/she is good at listening carefully to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can negotiate with others when he/she doesn't agree with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she contributes well to class discussion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she recognises his/her own feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she takes part in school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can summarise things that people say | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can listen to two sides of an argument without taking sides | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she gets good results in schoolwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can control his/her temper | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she goes out regularly after school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she makes appropriate eye contact with people when he/she talks with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is good at knowing how people are feeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she always does his/her classwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can walk away from difficult situations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she enjoys out of school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| In a group he/she can make his/her opinions heard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is good at coming up with ideas to solve problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she completes all of his/her homework to a good standard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she does not take his/her anger out on others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is helpful at home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Thankyou for completing the above

Were there any other changes in the Peer Mediator ?

Any other comments?

Peer Mediation Assessment Form

Parents (Post)

Name:

Form:

Below are a list of statements about different skills and activities. Please think about each of these areas and decide where you would place the Peer Mediator on a scale of 1 to 6 and circle the appropriate number.

| | Strongly disagree | Mostly disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Mostly agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| He/she is good at listening carefully to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can negotiate with others when he/she doesn't agree with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she contributes well to class discussion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she recognises his/her own feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she takes part in school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can summarise things that people say | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can listen to two sides of an argument without taking sides | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she gets good results in schoolwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can control his/her temper | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she goes out regularly after school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she makes appropriate eye contact with people when he/she talks with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is good at knowing how people are feeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she always does his/her classwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can walk away from difficult situations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she enjoys out of school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| In a group he/she can make his/her opinions heard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is good at coming up with ideas to solve problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she completes all of his/her homework to a good standard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she does not take his/her anger out on others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is helpful at home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Thankyou for completing the above

Were there any other changes in the Peer Mediator ?

Any other comments?

| |
|--|
| Peer Mediation Assessment Form Pupils who received Mediation from a Peer Mediator |
|--|

Did you find the Mediation helpful ? Yes / No / Maybe
Form:

Below are a list of statements about different skills and activities. Please think about each of these areas and decide where you would place the Peer Mediator on a scale of 1 to 6 and circle the appropriate number.

| | Strongly disagree | Mostly disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Mostly agree | Strongly agree |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| He/she is good at listening carefully to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can negotiate with others when he/she doesn't agree with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she contributes well to class discussion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she recognises his/her own feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she takes part in school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can summarise things that people say | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can listen to two sides of an argument without taking sides | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she gets good results in schoolwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can control his/her temper | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she goes out regularly after school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she makes appropriate eye contact with people when he/she talks with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is good at knowing how people are feeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she always does his/her classwork | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she can walk away from difficult situations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she enjoys out of school clubs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| In a group he/she can make his/her opinions heard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is good at coming up with ideas to solve problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she completes all of his/her homework to a good standard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she does not take his/her anger out on others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| He/she is helpful at home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Thankyou for completing the above

If you found the Mediation helpful, please say why ?

Did the Mediator use any skills which were particularly helpful or did they do anything which was particularly helpful ?

If the Mediation was not helpful please say why?

What might have helped ?

Peer Mediation

Inset for schools – suggested content

Aims

- 1. To gain an understanding of Conflict and conflict resolution strategies**
- 2. To gain an understanding of peer mediation**
- 3. To consider how to set up a peer mediation scheme in School**
- 4. To begin the planning process??**

Introduction:

- Conflict
- Why Mediation?
- Why peers?

Mediation:

- Further definition
- Problems brought to mediators

Within the School Environment:

- The whole school environment
- Behaviour management

The process of peer mediation:

- 6 steps
- Skills required
- Suggestions for training

Planning a project:

- The project in Buckinghamshire
- Looking at your School – how will it fit in?
- Setting up a Peer mediation Scheme – Needs, Setting up a programme and Issues for planning
- Discussion

Ideas for Training Peer Mediators and Examples of Materials

These materials are based on work completed in the two project schools by Di Gosling (Deputy Senior Youth Worker), Sue Martin (Co-ordinator, Aylesbury Youth Action) and Ann Stone (Co-ordinator, Way-In). Additional materials have been added from the following reference:

Schrumpf, F., Crawford, D.K. and Bodine, R.J. (1997) *Peer Mediation: Conflict Resolution in Schools. (Revised Edition)*. Research Press: Illinois

Introduction

1. Warm up exercises – getting to know each other
2. Establish ground rules for training
3. Sharing reasons for wanting to be involved in the project

Introduction to Conflict

1. Defining Conflict [Sheet 1] – Mediators write/draw in 4 boxes what they think of when they hear the word “conflict”. Then the group brainstorm before writing / drawing in the final 2 boxes something positive and something negative about conflict.
2. Conflict Happens [Sheet 2]
3. Responses to Conflict [Sheet 3]
4. What can happen in a conflict [Sheet 4]

Introduction to mediation:

1. Brainstorm “Mediation”
2. Definition
3. How does mediation work [Sheet 5]
4. Situations when it might be used
5. Skills and qualities of a mediator [Sheet 6]
6. Stages of Mediation

7. Checking skills – role play scenarios and Observer checklist [Sheets 7-8]
8. Boundaries and Confidentiality. When should Mediators pass situations back to staff?

Stereotypes and perceptions

1. What's in the picture [Sheets 9 - 11]
2. Definitions of Equal Opportunity

Feelings

1. Anxiety and Anger – discussion of 'how it feels' and physiological changes
2. Early Warning Signs [Sheet 12]

Communication Skills

1. Basic listening – in pairs one person talks and the other listens without speaking. Compare with the listener being inattentive – how does it feel? What are the differences in the listener's behaviour?
2. What hinders listening [Sheet 13]
3. Listening and summarising, role play activity in groups of 3 [Sheet 10]
4. Open and closed questions [Sheet 14]

Planning for Peer Mediation in your school

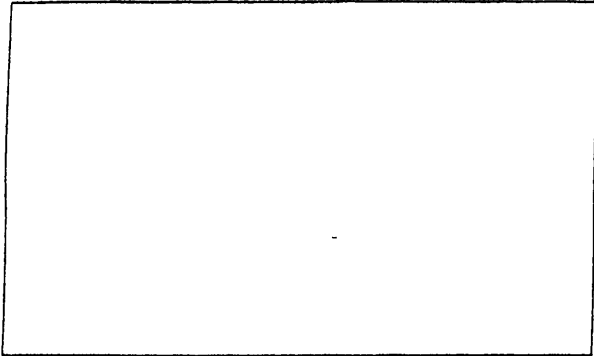
1. Where / When / How / Fears [Sheet 15]

ACTIVITY 3

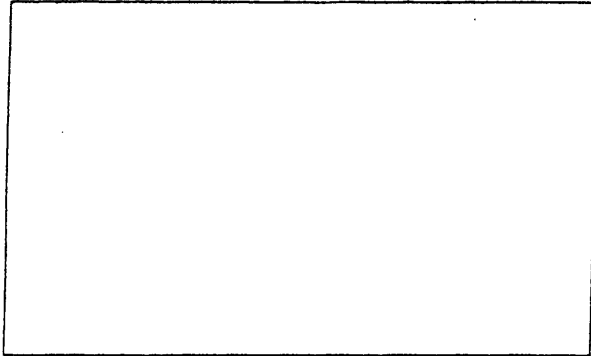
UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

DEFINING CONFLICT WORKSHEET

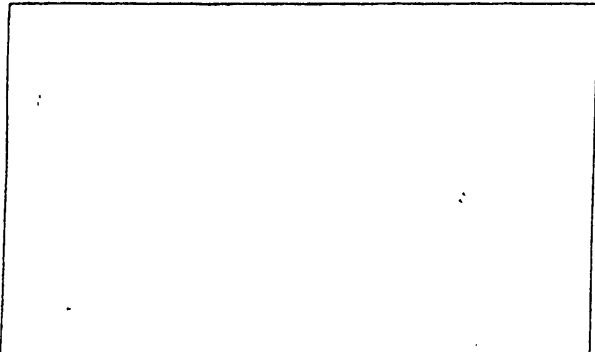
PART 1



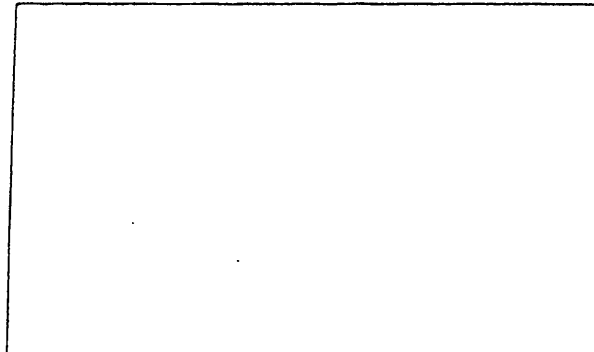
Conflict



Conflict

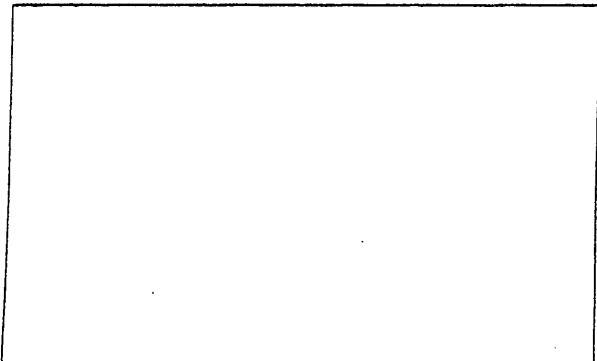


Conflict

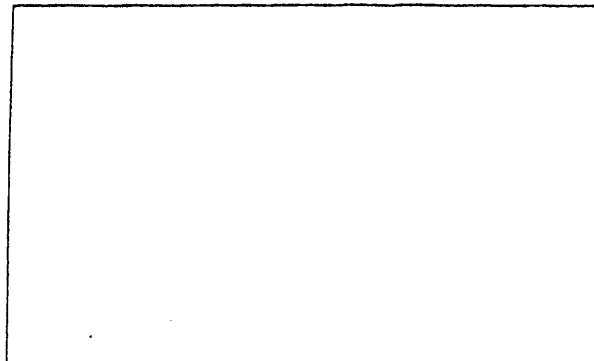


Conflict

PART 2



Conflict



Conflict

CONFLICT HAPPENS WORKSHEET

Record two or three examples of conflicts you have experienced or know that others have experienced for each of the following settings.

HOME (with parents or other adults)

HOME (with brothers, sisters, other kids)

AT SCHOOL (with peers)

AT SCHOOL (with teachers, other adults)

AT SCHOOL (with rules, expectations)

IN THE NEWS

RESPONSES TO CONFLICT WORKSHEET

Put a check mark (✓) in the boxes that show the responses that are most typical for you when you are in conflict with another person.

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yell back or threaten the person | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Avoid or ignore the person | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Change the subject | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Try to understand the other side | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Complain to an adult | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Call the other person names | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Let the person have his or her way | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Try to reach a compromise | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Let an adult decide who is right | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Talk to find ways to agree | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Apologize | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hit or push back | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cry | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Make it into a joke | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pretend my feelings are not hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Sheet 4

What can happen in a conflict?

1. SPECIFIC PROBLEM OR ISSUE
2. PERSONAL ANTAGONISM
 - charges are made
 - other person seen as the problem
 - labelling
3. DEFENSIVENESS
 - push and push back
 - defensiveness in one person triggers defensiveness in the other
4. EXPANSION OF ISSUES
 - Issues added to original single issue
 - more problems arise
 - talk is less specific
5. BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION
 - communication less direct
 - emotional element increases
 - understanding goes down
6. SPIRALLING MISTRUST
 - escalation
 - insult
 - followed by insult
 - eye to eye more and more entrenched
7. POLARISATION
 - seeking allies
 - groups organised into two camps
 - no back down
 - nothing can ever be the same again

Sheet 5

How does Mediation work?

MEDIATION SEEKS TO

- change disputing behaviour
- resolve conflict
- make realistic, workable agreements
- maintain parity between the parties
- treat people fairly

MEDIATION PROVIDES OPPORTUNITES FOR PEOPLE TO

- Communicate (speak and listen)
- Exchange feelings, ideas and perceptions
- Negotiate
- Participate fully in the making of decisions

MEDIATION IS

- Constructive
- Informal
- Staged (step-by-step approach)
- Facilitated by an impartial person
- Confidential
- Able to deal with a variety of issues
- Future-focused

Sheet 6a

SKILLS OF A MEDIATOR

Listening and general communication:

Giving people space to say what they need to, feeding back accurately what they say, asking appropriate, encouraging questions and gathering facts effectively.

Summarising:

Being able to gather together and re-present facts, feelings, issues and ways forward.

Building rapport:

Creating the feelings in other people that their thoughts and feelings are understood, giving them a chance to make their own decisions, at their own pace and demonstrating a real interest in helping parties resolve their disputes.

Assertiveness:

Being clear about your own needs and able to express them to other people without putting them down.

Facilitation:

Assisting other people to communicate, listen, express emotions and concerns

Problem-solving:

Finding out facts, identifying problems, looking at what can be done about them, and working out plans of action.

Conflict management:

Staying calm, being assertive, encouraging communication between parties when emotions are running high, defusing anger, acknowledging and responding to strong feelings, keeping positive.

Presentation skills:

Able to put across ideas, create summaries in ways which help people build understanding. Realising the effectiveness of verbal expressions, gesture and body language in communicating with the parties and using them appropriately.

Management of the mediation process:

Able to put together a variety of skills, provide a structure for the parties and keep control of the process.

Sheet 6b

QUALITIES OF A MEDIATOR

Understanding of situations and people:

Has experience with people, some understanding of various different kinds of behaviour, the necessary substantive knowledge of the issues and a familiarity with relevant rules or guidelines.

Ability to learn from experience:

Willing to build on knowledge, self-awareness and understanding of others,

Genuineness:

Honesty, knowledge of one's own strengths and weaknesses

Openness to other people:

Respect, understanding of differences and an awareness of own prejudices

Impartiality:

Is concerned about the outcomes for both sides and has the ability to demonstrate that to both parties.

Self-awareness:

Pays attention to own feelings and behaviour, so as not to treat the parties unfairly without realising it.

Flexibility:

Is able to change process in order to meet the needs of each situation.

Balance:

Has the ability to be aware of own feelings, and balance them with the needs of the situation; can match the needs for authority and control with a concern for the parties.

Commitment to equal opportunities:

Has willingness to build an understanding of how isms' such as racism, sexism and ageism play a part in disputes between people, to be aware of different cultural needs and to work with a diversity of clients and colleagues in an even-handed non-discriminatory fashion.

Analytical ability:

Has the ability to assess realistic chances of change and agreement; knows when to stop and continue.

Creativity:

Ability to come up with ideas, try different ways of working where necessary and be flexible to changing situations.

Professionalism:

Takes work seriously, is prepared and on time, is respectful to parties at all times.

Sheet 7

Jason and Simon

Jason

You think Simon is a creep. He's always the favourites of all the teachers. You think that none of the teachers like you and they think you are stupid and don't do homework, but it's really hard to work at home. Your Mum shouts at the other kids and the telly's on all of the time. You never get any peace to do projects.

Last week Simon came in bragging that he would get high marks for his brilliant art project. You saw red. He knew yours wasn't finished. You wanted to make him sweat. You pushed his project under a pile of papers at the back of the art room. You thought you would get it back later.

Afterwards he was really upset about it. You felt a bit bad, even though you denied knowing anything about it at first and there was a huge row.

Simon

You are good at most subjects at school. You have hopes that after GCSE's you'll get A levels and go on to university.

The other students, especially Jason, don't like this. They are always finding opportunities to tease and insult you.

Last week you had to hand in an art project to be marked for your GCSE. You left it on your desk while you went to the cloakroom and when you came back it was gone. Jason was smirking at you all day. You feel sure he knows how it went missing. You decide to ask him outright about it. This results in him denying it and you both having a really fierce argument about it.

Sarah and Allison

Sarah

You are fairly new to the school. Everything started OK and you mixed well in school and out, but now the other students do not seem to like you. It appears that Allison is the ring-leader. She picks on you for no reason and makes comments about your hair and clothes. She puts down everything you say. You usually have the courage to stand up for yourself and will do so, but quite often the others will join in and make nasty comments. You are now starting to feel really alone and confused about all of this.

Allison

You have been at your school since the age of 11 years. You have many friends and usually get on with all types of people. You also have a good social life outside the school. Sarah is a new girl in the school. At first you thought she was OK and would be a good addition to your circle of friends. However, you soon noticed that other people seemed to think she would make a good friend too. You felt that this had an effect on the number of people who like you and that she was getting more attention than you. This felt really uncomfortable and she was taking your place. At first you did not know what to do, but then you thought that if you could make the others see that she was not worth having around, then they would all focus attention back to you.

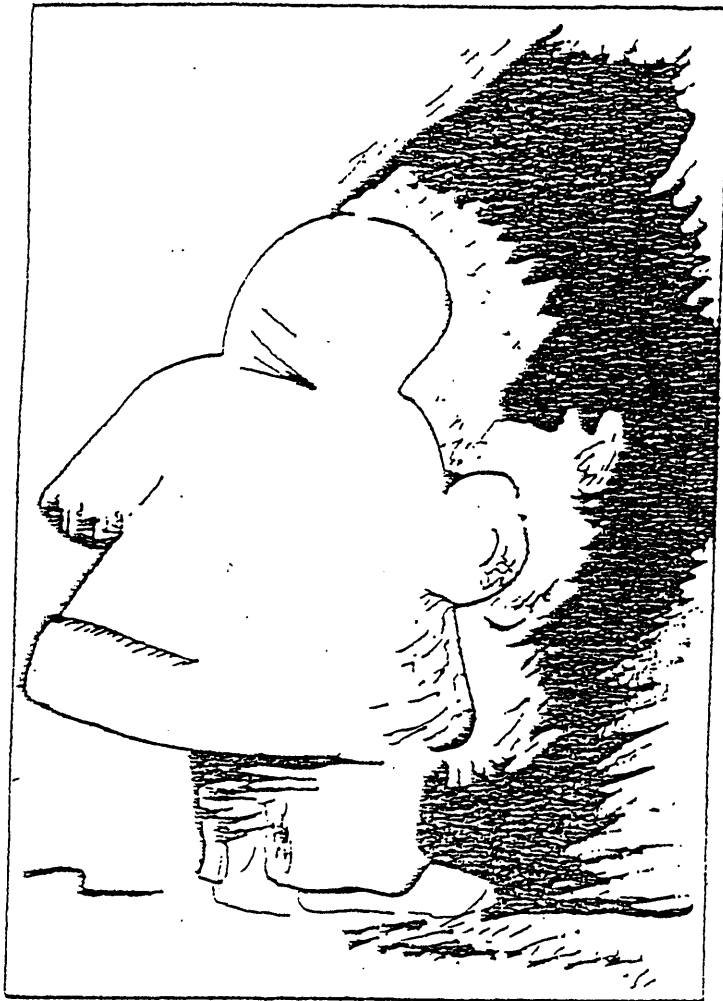
Sheet 8

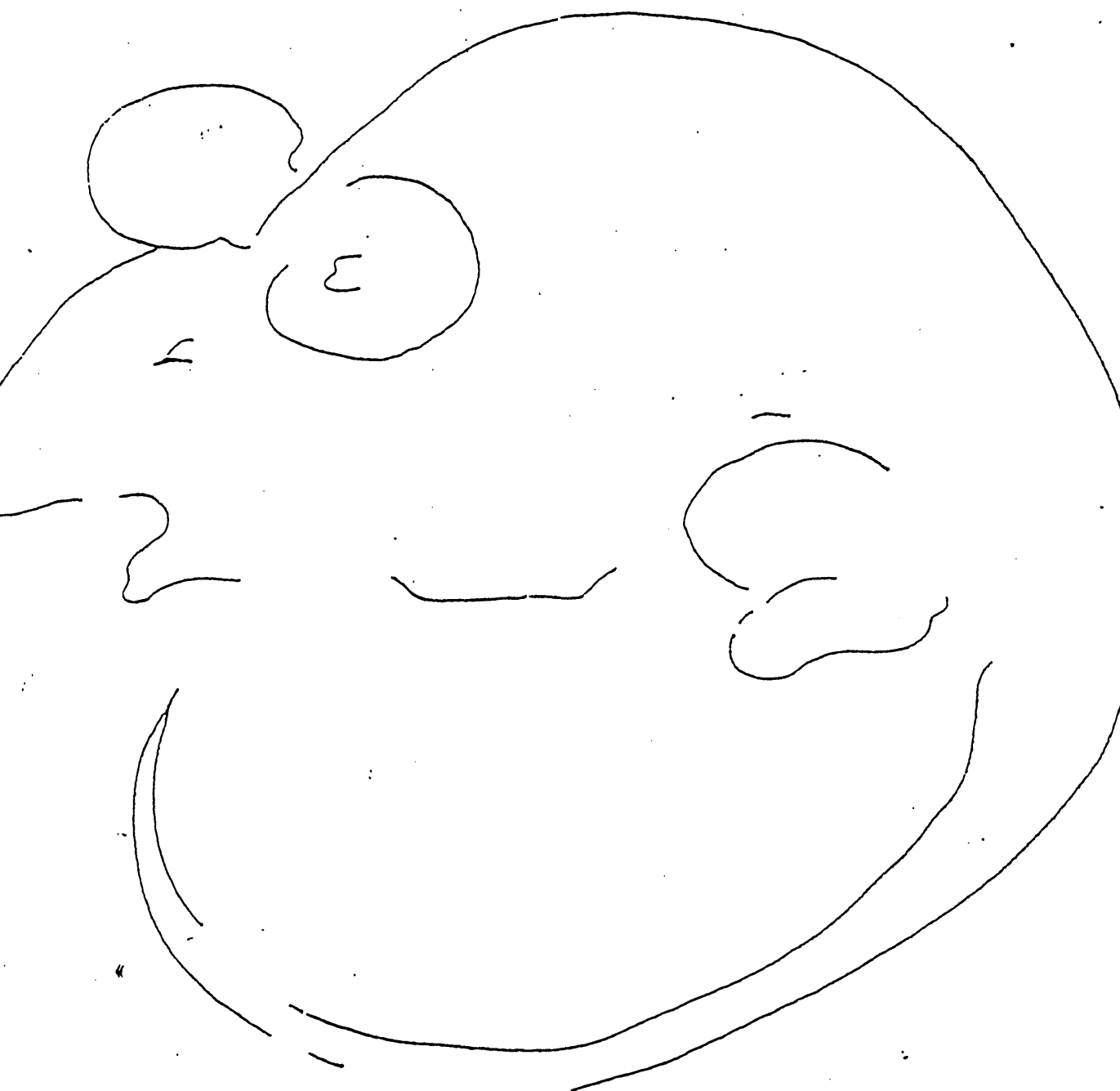
OBSERVER CHECKLIST

Watch and listen to the mediators carefully. Tick when you see or hear them do the following:

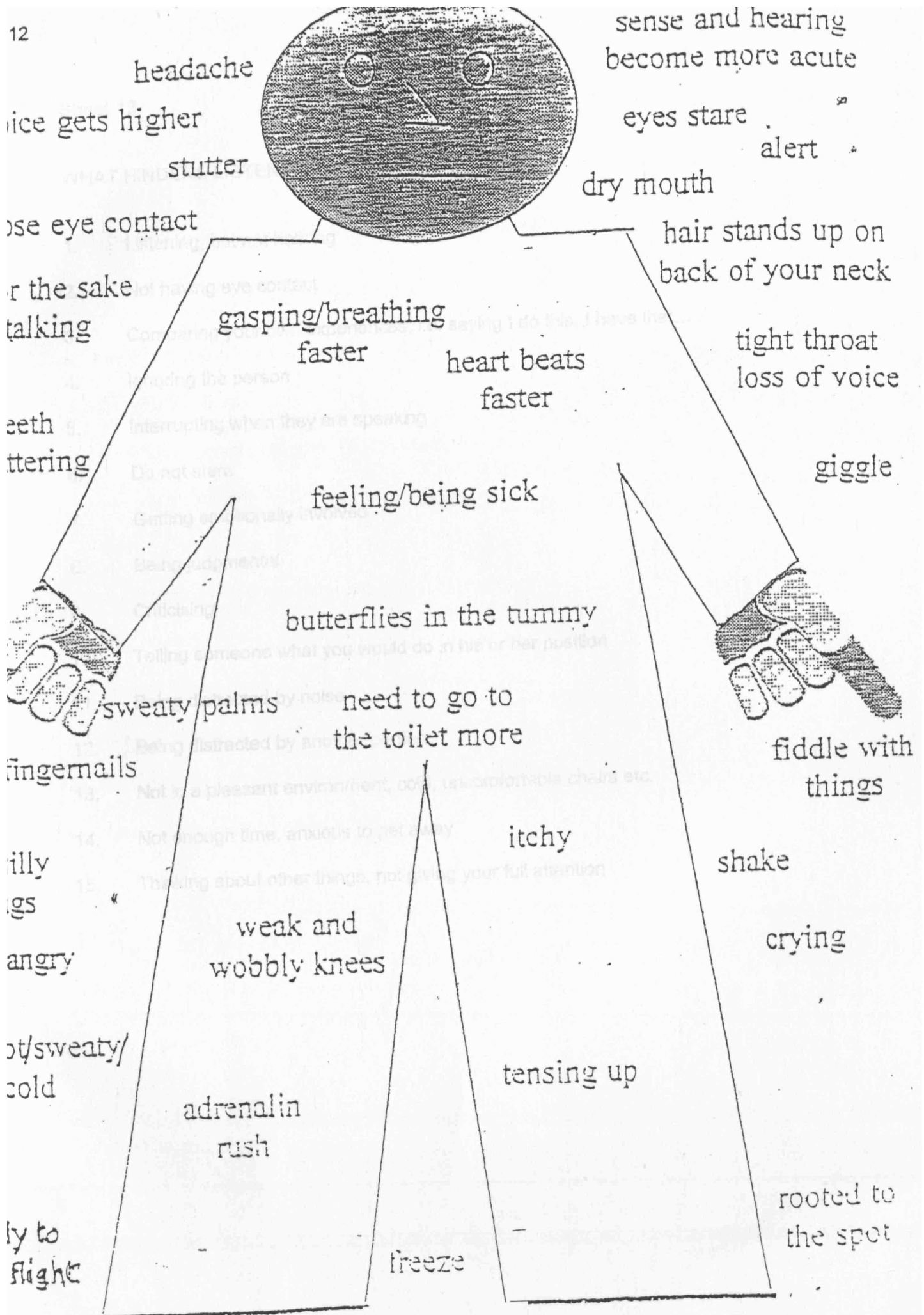
- ☐ Welcome the two parties
- ☐ Introduce themselves
- ☐ Tell them what mediators do
- ☐ Tell them the rules
- ☐ Check that both parties agree to them
- ☐ Listen to Party 1
- ☐ Mediator repeats story
- ☐ Listen to Party 2
- ☐ Mediator repeats story
- ☐ Ask party 1 how he/she felt
- ☐ Mediator repeats what he/she says
- ☐ Ask party 2 how he/she felt
- ☐ Mediator repeats what he/she says
- ☐ Ask party 1 if they understand how Party 2 felt
- ☐ Ask party 2 if they understand how party 1 felt
- ☐ Ask party 1 what he/she needs
- ☐ Mediator repeats what is needed
- ☐ Ask arty 2 what he/she needs
- ☐ Mediator repeats what is needed
- ☐ Brainstorm some possible solutions
- ☐ Help the parties reach an agreement

ALSO: Did the mediators take sides? Did they stay calm? Did they offer solutions? Did they keep everyone to the rules?









Sheet 13

WHAT HINDERS LISTENING

1. Listening, but not hearing
2. Not having eye contact
3. Comparing your own experiences, i.e. saying I do this, I have that...
4. Ignoring the person
5. Interrupting when they are speaking
6. Do not stare
7. Getting emotionally involved
8. Being judgmental
9. Criticising
10. Telling someone what you would do in his or her position
11. Being distracted by noise
12. Being distracted by another person
13. Not in a pleasant environment, cold, uncomfortable chairs etc.
14. Not enough time, anxious to get away
15. Thinking about other things, not giving your full attention

Sheet 14

OPEN QUESTIONS

Change the following closed questions to open questions

- ◆ Do you really like her?
- ◆ Did that put you in a bad mood?
- ◆ Did you feel angry?
- ◆ Do you want to tell me how you are feeling?
- ◆ Do you sleep badly?
- ◆ Will you move house?
- ◆ Can you think of any other times when that happened?
- ◆ You must be feeling lonely, are you?
- ◆ Do you think you could tell him how you feel?
- ◆ Do you want to leave your job or not?
- ◆ Did you leave school because you wanted to earn money?
- ◆ Has it helped talking about it?

«

Planning the project – notes from a planning meeting in a secondary school

When

- ❖ Lunchtimes
- ❖ Before school starts
- ❖ After school
- ❖ 2 or 3 times a week
- ❖ Enough in group to run shifts so it could take place every day
- ❖ Different times, e.g. during lesson time? Others in class may ask why and a year 8 pupil would need a lot of confidence to leave a classroom during lesson time.

Where

- ❖ Library – other people use it
- ❖ Youth centre
- ❖ Teacher's office
- ❖ Learning support department

How

- ❖ Identify peer mediators with photos displayed like the school council
- ❖ Ribbons or badges
- ❖ Different coloured tie
- ❖ Advertise in school assemblies

Fears

- ❖ No-one turning up
- ❖ Doing something wrong
- ❖ If someone is really upset – not knowing what to say – saying the wrong thing
- ❖ Somebody that's violent
- ❖ Memories may be raised if you have experienced the same problem
- ❖ Getting too involved
- ❖ Knowing when to refer the problem to someone else
- ❖ Knowing the boundaries
- ❖ Being told about something you don't feel comfortable about

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN – THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

1. Aims and scope of this assignment

This assignment focuses upon school improvement in relation to the work of Educational Psychologists in supporting schools causing concern. The assignment will consider the context of Education Development Plans and the need for cross-department working within the traditional education department structures, as well as looking at the work already completed in developing support for these schools in a Local Authority in the United Kingdom. The assignment will then give a brief outline of the inspection process currently occurring in schools (Ofsted Inspections) and the difficulties faced by schools who are identified by that process as causing concern, either through being identified as having serious weaknesses or as being in need of Special Measures. Key points from the literature around school effectiveness and school improvement will then be reviewed before the possible role of Educational Psychologists is explored, particularly in light of the recent research report about the Current Role, Good Practice and Future Directions of Educational Psychology Services (Kelly & Gray, 2000) and the requirement for extended three year training.

The development of the work within one authority's Educational Psychology Service will then be considered in the light of the above, considering in particular three strands: communication and information sharing about schools, the role of Educational Psychologists in intervention and our role in evaluation of interventions.

2. The context of the work

2.1. The role of Local Education Authorities in school improvement and Education Development Plans

Central to the role of Local Education Authorities (LEA's) in relation to school improvement and raising standards for all pupils are Education Development Plans (EDP's). EDPs were introduced under sections 6 and 7 of the Schools

Standards and Framework Act (1998) with the purpose of raising the standards of education provided for all children in an LEA's area and improving the performance of schools maintained by that LEA (DfES, 2001). The role of LEAs, in working in partnership with schools is described as providing "appropriately targeted challenge and support in order to achieve improvement, applying the principle of intervention in inverse proportion to success" (DfES, 2001 (p.2)). This balance provides a challenge for LEAs in terms of targeting support, identifying the kind of support which is most effective for individual schools, being aware of and studying best practice, as well as identifying schools which are just beginning to have difficulties.

The Guidance for the new round of EDP's lays down support for schools causing concern as a priority to be covered by all LEA's. These schools may be identified through the LEA's own monitoring procedures and / or by Ofsted. The guidance emphasises the LEA's role in relation to securing levels of performance in schools which will prevent them requiring special measures, having serious weaknesses or being identified as underachieving. This is described as being achieved through identifying schools setting insufficiently challenging targets and providing support to help those schools to exceed those targets.

LEA Advisory services hold prime responsibility for school improvement work. Recognition is now occurring in the author's authority that the advisory service is needing to define its role alongside other support services visiting schools, as well as with the schools themselves, so that a planned approach can be taken to identifying and supporting schools causing concern. The Educational Psychology Service are taking a more defined role in terms of working within school improvement and are developing guidelines to define possible Educational Psychologist (EP) roles. The Advisory service is revising procedures for working with schools causing concern and links are being made between the two, through joint working.

The EDP will require the targeting of support and action to vulnerable groups of children including children from minority ethnic groups, children with special educational needs, looked after children, 'sick' children, excluded pupils, children from mobile families, pregnant schoolgirls, teenage mothers and gifted and talented pupils. The development of the EDP can therefore be seen to need

an approach incorporating a range of professional knowledge from across traditional educational domains. These might include, for example, expertise for minority ethnic children, expertise from Pupil Referral Units and from officers with responsibility for exclusion, Education Welfare Officers with expertise in monitoring and setting targets for attendance, Educational Psychologists with a role in supporting vulnerable children in schools and so on.

2.2. Ofsted Inspections

Currently, schools causing concern are identified through two routes, through LEA procedures and through Ofsted Inspections. The role of Ofsted in relation to inspecting schools is described below.

The Office for Standards in Education was created in 1992 as an independent, non-ministerial government Department to design and implement a system for inspecting schools. The inspection system was introduced to provide a national evaluation of schools, allowing for comparisons between schools with similar intakes, identification of best practice and additional support for failing schools through Special Measures. Its aim is to ensure that individual schools are accountable for the standards they achieve, the quality of education they provide and for their financial management (value for money). It enables parents and local communities to have access to information about their schools. The four-year cycle for inspecting schools was established in the Education Act (1992).

The identification of strengths and weaknesses by inspection teams offers a framework or vehicle for school improvement through enabling schools to, for example, request additional support from the LEA, for buildings or for more support for difficult pupils. Ferguson, Earley, Fidler and Ouston (2000) outline the role of Ofsted inspections in relation to ensuring that Heads, governors and LEAs comply with new statutory requirements. The framework for inspection defines the criteria on which schools are judged and sets out a code of practice for the conduct of inspections. This information is available to all schools to allow them to consider the criteria when planning for school development and school improvement.

Ofsted Inspections are carried out by a team, led by a Registered Inspector and including a Lay Inspector. The team are required to make judgements about the

quality of education provided by the school, the educational standards achieved in the school, the management of financial resources and the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the pupils. Inspectors are involved in observations of lessons, scrutiny of documents and pupil's work and discussions with staff, parents and pupils.

The first round of inspections of secondary schools began in 1993 and primary schools in 1994. This was completed for all schools in 1998. The framework has been updated since the first round of inspections, including a move to a six year cycle of inspection for some schools in 1996 and a revised framework including differentiated or 'light touch' inspections introduced in January 2000. These inspections are for schools who had a favourable report in the last inspection, who have a record of improvement or sustained high standards, show favourable achievements in relation to similar schools and have good overall performance in relation to national averages.

2.3. Schools causing concern

If a school is judged to have failed an inspection, or to be likely to fail to give pupils an acceptable standard of education, it is said to be in need of *Special Measures*. Schools judged as such may show evidence of the following: low attainment and poor progress, regular disruptive behaviour, poor attendance and high levels of truancy, a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, pupils at physical or emotional risk within the community, ineffective leadership and management, poor relationships between staff and pupils, low morale, high staff turnover and poor value for money.

After the inspection judgement, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) visit the school within a few weeks to ratify (or occasionally not) the decision. The school is then monitored by the School Improvement division of Ofsted through the arrangements set out in DfEE Circular 6/99, "Schools Causing Concern". Six months later, HMI visit again and then termly for monitoring visits. LEAs, involved in supporting maintained schools in such a position, must prepare a commentary on the school's action plan and a statement of action which it, the LEA, intends to take to support the school and to bring about improvement.

Schools in *serious weaknesses*, although providing an acceptable standard of education, have significant difficulties in one or more areas of their work. They too are monitored through the same mechanisms as set out above, but on a less regular basis. The LEA is involved in preparing its own action plan and in commenting on the school's action plan. If progress is inadequate, the school is likely to be declared in need of Special Measures following an inspection by HMI.

Underachieving Schools are those who, although not identified as having serious weaknesses, are judged to have performance below that expected of schools in similar circumstances. Factors considered are the effectiveness of the school, improvement since the last inspection and the context of the school compared to similar schools. The evidence base used includes performance data and inspection judgements.

In summary, the delivery of the EDP establishes the role of the LEA in preventing schools entering difficulties and in supporting them if difficulties are identified, either through the LEA's own procedures or through Ofsted Inspections. The assignment will now go on to consider the role that one Educational Psychology Service has played within schools causing concern in a shire authority in England.

2.4. Educational Psychology practice in a shire authority – practice context

In one service in a shire authority in England, several members of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) have been involved in working with schools in special measures. There were concerns about the difficulty this placed on the service in terms of the demands on Educational Psychologist (EP) time and the inflexibility of the system that was used to allocate nominal amounts of time to schools on an annual basis. There were concerns about the effectiveness of the service's links with the Advisory service and about the effectiveness of the Local Education Authority support as a whole to schools causing concern. Some of the schools involved had been successful in 'coming out' of special measures (see Appendix 1 for an example) whilst others had been amalgamated with other schools and had failed to come out of their difficulties as individual schools.

2.4.1. Reviewing practice

In September 2000 a new post was developed in the service, Senior Educational Psychologist (School Improvement). As the new postholder, the author first carried out a review of EP involvement in Ofsted inspections and in working with schools causing concern (see Appendix 2). Nine EP's completed the questionnaire and the results suggested that EP's were likely to be aware of a forthcoming inspection, most likely through the school. They were not likely to have been consulted about concerns about the school before the inspection and contact with the Attached Advisers for the schools was only recorded in 33% of cases (n=3). The EP was more likely to have had contact with the Senior Advisory Officer for the Area. Educational Psychologists did gain a copy of the Ofsted report or summary although often they did not know who this had come from. Educational Psychologists did not know if support from the EPS was written in the school's or LEA's Action Plans and only 1 out of 8 had received a copy of either plan. Comments were made by the EPs about the support which had been offered to the schools and suggestions were made about improvements which could be made.

2.4.2. Communication and information sharing about all schools

The service was involved in attending the Area School Improvement Team meetings, held monthly and chaired by Senior Advisory Officers for each area. The espoused purpose of these meetings was to bring together knowledge about schools in a confidential setting, so that any difficulties could be identified and support planned. The clear understanding was that headteachers knew about the meetings and were clear about the purpose of the meetings. However, they would not necessarily be aware that their school was being discussed. This immediately raised concerns for the Educational Psychology Service, where clear, honest and open communication was felt to be valued and where, confidentiality was felt to be an issue in our relationship with schools.

Further work has been undertaken within the service on these issues and these will be revisited and discussed in light of psychological research and theory in 'Integrating research and practice'.

3. Psychological Theory and Research

This assignment will now go on to give a brief overview of school improvement research and school effectiveness research in order to provide a basis for the discussion about the possible role of EPs in supporting school improvement. This assignment does not aim to give a definitive review of these large fields of research, but does aim to look at some specific issues which might relate to EP interventions within a local authority context.

Sammons et al (1995) differentiate between school effectiveness (what an effective school looks like) and school improvement (how an effective school becomes effective). They outline that although different, the approaches and orientations of the research tend to produce complimentary findings.

3.1. School Effectiveness and School Improvement

Stoll and Mortimore (1997) define *school effectiveness* in more detail as pupil progress that is greater than might be expected from consideration of the pupil intake. They outline how the research has looked at whether different resources, processes and organisational arrangements in schools affect student outcomes and if so, how. School effectiveness research has looked at 'value-added' a process which aims to make fair comparisons between schools, yielding estimates of average progress, through taking into account prior attainment of individual children entering the school. However, the approach only tackles academic achievement and attendance and does not look at other measures such as attitudinal change, creativity and co-operation.

Stoll and Mortimore (1997) conclude that judgements about school effectiveness can result in simplistic views about schools and a number of reasons are discussed. These include a) the wide confidence intervals for measuring school effects (so that only schools at the extremes can be separated); b) the need for judgements to be made based on pupil performance over a number of years and c) the complexity of school effects where certain pupil groups do better than others in certain schools. Judgements about the effectiveness of individual schools for all pupils, may therefore be flawed.

Hopkins, Enskill and West (1994) define *school improvement* as “a strategy for educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change... (it) is about raising student achievement through focusing on the teaching-learning process and the conditions which support it” (p.3).

Dalin (1998) draws from Hopkins et al's definition a number of ways of regarding school improvement – as a vehicle for planned change, as usually involving some form of external support, as emphasising strategies for strengthening the school's capacity for change whilst addressing issues of raising pupil achievement through a focus on the teaching and learning process.

Stoll and Mortimore (1997) outline how *school improvement* research began in the 1960's with a top-down emphasis on target-setting, external knowledge, looking at the curriculum and school organisation and with pupil-oriented outcomes as the goal. In the 1980's a more 'bottom-up' approach was taken centring on practitioner knowledge, school self-evaluation and review, where the orientation of the research shifted towards change. However, this process orientation did not always lead to increasing student achievement and hence research once again focused upon the evaluation of outcomes. Research by Hopkins et al (1994) blended the two foci, measuring pupil outcomes but also looking at classroom and school-level processes leading to the outcomes. The emphasis was on working with the schools and not on them.

Stoll and Mortimore (1997) emphasise that all school improvement involves change. Van Velzen, Miles, Eckholm, Hameyer and Robin (1985) include that the change must be aimed at the whole school, must be systematic, extend over a period of time and that a consensus on goals is required which should be clarified early on in the school improvement process.

Dalin (1998) raises questions about how we define improvements. He raises the issue that an improvement for one person may not be an improvement for another. Longer term improvements may not be brought about by what feels or looks like improvement in the short term. Dalin reflects that definitions of school improvement depend on our own definitions of organisations, on our own value systems and on those of the schools. If the visions of schools are to prepare and educate young people for adult life, then despite ongoing developments, the main purpose and visions of schools have not changed.

In summary, Stoll and Mortimore draw together the two fields of research in a summary of factors for schools effectiveness and school improvement. These can be found in Figure 1, Appendix 1.

3.2. Inspection and schools in difficulties

As discussed previously, schools can be identified as having difficulties through Ofsted or through the LEA. This assignment will focus on schools identified as having serious weaknesses or as being in need of Special Measures by an Ofsted Inspection. The section will begin with an overview of some of the concerns about Ofsted Inspections before going on to consider the characteristics of schools identified as being in need of improvement.

Fitzgibbon (1995) is strong in her criticism of Ofsted Inspection and questions whether Ofsted Inspectors have the necessary skills to judge or assess standards of achievement. It is suggested that their assessment should be limited to auditing school procedures and checking whether legal requirements are being met, (e.g., health and safety and curriculum provision). Fitzgibbon suggests that Ofsted's judgements of teacher effectiveness, made on the basis of observation in a few pre-prepared classes, are little better than guesses and evidence of their ability to judge teacher effectiveness well is requested. Fitzgibbon (1995) highlights the damage which a poor inspection judgement can give, with potentially devastating effects for individuals, but also undermining the confidence of the community, parents and children attached to the school. The lack of evidence about the effectiveness of Ofsted Inspections is emphasised and the issues about the size of samples used by Ofsted and the unrepresentative nature of the week in which the Inspectors visit is highlighted. Studies of inter-inspector reliability ratings are requested (Fidler, Earley, Ouston and Davies, 1998). In summary, Fitzgibbon asks for a system of Inspection where a member of staff works with the inspection team and where value-added data is evaluated.

Fidler, Earley, Ouston and Davies (1998) did provide evidence of inter-rater reliability for Ofsted Inspectors citing Matthew et al (1997) who found that 66% of Ofsted Inspectors observations agreed the same grade and 97% within one

grade either side. Ouston, Fidler and Earley (1997) carried out a questionnaire survey of Headteachers of secondary schools, finding that 87% of Headteachers felt that their Ofsted report was fair or too positive and 21% felt that it was too negative. Ouston et al's research concluded that secondary schools were, on the whole, positive about the developmental impact of Ofsted on their schools. However, in looking at the impact of Ofsted on the speed of development within the same study, the picture seems less clear, with 4% of headteachers reporting that development had stopped, 24% reporting that it had slowed, 34% reporting that it had speeded up and 38% reporting that it had made no significant impact on the speed of the schools' development. The author would suggest from this data that in only 34% of the schools asked, did Ofsted have a positive impact on the speed of development, which I would not classify as a majority.

One of the difficulties with the current framework of inspection which has been discussed is the role of inspectors in making inferences about teaching and learning based on snapshots of school life seen. Inspectors are required to make a large number of judgements about teaching in a short time frame and a tendency to mark depending on the overall impression of the teacher's effectiveness is highlighted.

Ferguson et al (2000) reflect on the power of Ofsted and suggest that we need to remember that inspection reports are based on judgements and that inferences read in by an inspector depend on that individual's previous experience and frame of reference. Ferguson et al quote Fink (1999) visiting from Canada who commented on the tough approach of inspection in the U.K. and its emphasis on blame rather than encouragement and support for struggling schools.

Ferguson et al (2000) looking at schools responses to inspection, found that it was not uncommon to find that 'struggling schools' served a disadvantaged community and "felt that they would never reach the Ofsted ideal" (p.18). These schools were often demoralised by criticisms by Ofsted and typically used beliefs about the incompetence of the Inspection team to protect themselves. Ferguson quotes that only 1% of schools with a high proportion of socially disadvantaged children receive 'very good' inspection reports compared with 20% of those with only a small proportion. Ferguson et al discuss the influence of social disadvantage on early attainment alongside poor health, school

attendance and other adverse influences acting on children living in disadvantaged areas, including poor parenting, lack of parental education, poverty, poor housing, poor adult mental health and so on. It is therefore not surprising that schools providing education for children in these areas will face difficulties, in raising children's attainment (given the importance of previous attainment and homework in raising standards), in working with parents and, for example, in reducing truancy. Schools increasingly aim to show their value added – what difference they are making for pupils from these backgrounds – and Ofsted inspectors will hopefully recognise these differences and support success when it is due.

In terms of the Ofsted criteria for making judgements about quality of teaching, when viewed in terms of a class with significant numbers of children with learning and behaviour difficulties, they can be extremely demanding. For example, 'a significant minority of pupils are not engaged in the lesson', 'there are weaknesses in controlling the class', 'pupils are not making much progress'. It will be much easier for a teacher to be seen to succeed in managing a class where none of the young people have behaviour problems. Having said this, it is obviously important to consider the role of competent teaching and classroom management, leading to learning and improved pupil behaviour. Another difficulty faced by schools in these circumstances is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining high quality staff.

3.3. Supporting schools in difficulties

If we consider the definition of school improvement as always involving change, we can go on to look at the concept of change in more detail. This will be considered alongside school culture in thinking through how schools in difficulties can best be supported. Stoll and Mortimore (1997) outline three broad phases in the change process:

1. *Initiation* – the process leading up to the decision to change
2. *Implementation* – the early experience of putting innovations into practice
3. *Institutionalisation* – where innovations are embedded into ongoing practice

Fullan (1991) adds 'Outcomes', the variety and extent of results of change, including the impact on teachers, pupils, parents and the community.

Stoll (1999) considers the significance of school culture within school improvement and raises the question of why some schools provide “fertile gardens” for school improvement efforts whilst others appear like “black holes” (p. 30). Stoll and Mortimore (1997) outline how schools which have difficulty improving are schools where problems arise in the process of change. Problems in the process of change lead to resistance which causes a slowing down of the process of change and to frustration. Staff are unable to respond to this by adapting conditions and culture and the priority focus of work is likely to be abandoned in favour of a new one. Stoll and Fink (1996) therefore highlight the importance of the school having the capacity for and ownership of change and alongside this, an understanding of its own culture.

In working with a school in supporting improvement, assessing its culture and capacity for change will be important alongside consideration of the school's developmental stage. Schein (1985) outlines three developmental stages. The first stage, the early stage is characterised by a dissemination of dominant values by the leaders, with the school clarifying its values, articulating its identity and sharing this explicitly. In the second stage, ‘midlife’, the most important cultural aspects of the school have become embedded and implicit, although changes in external and internal context provide different strengths and weaknesses at different times. Subcultures have developed within the school, smaller groupings with slightly different norms, beliefs and values. Change becomes more difficult for schools in midlife although ‘unfreezing’ can occur if the school is not meeting its goals. In the final stage, ‘maturity or stagnation’ the school ceases to respond to its environment and change is very difficult.

In considering school culture further as an important area to consider in school improvement efforts, the assignment will go on to look at school culture in more detail.

Prosser (1999) discusses the difficulties in defining school culture and ethos. He provides the following definition:

“School culture is an unseen and unobservable force behind school activities, a unifying theme that provides meaning, direction and mobilisation for school members”. (p.14) It is the unobservable nature of school culture which makes it

difficult to measure and an often missed part of the equation for schools in difficulties. Ogbonna (1993) defines organisational culture as “the interweaving of the individual into a community and the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of a known group from another. It is the values, beliefs and customs that an individual holds in common with members of the social unit or group” (p.42). Schein (1985) notes behavioural regularities, including language and rituals as being amongst the more observable features of school culture alongside espoused values, guiding philosophies, feelings and climate. A distinction between the school’s espoused philosophies, as outlined in policies and given on request and between the school’s theories in use, (i.e. what actually occurs), would be useful in working with a school to assess its culture.

In actually working with a school to promote change, Sarason (1996) acknowledges the need for the worker to have a knowledge of the school’s norms so that any significant work with the school will ‘fit’ in with the school’s norms so that it will be accepted. Stoll and Fink (1996) describe ten cultural norms which affect school improvement. Again, these provide a useful framework for those working with schools causing concern to think about the school’s capacity for improvement. These are sharing goals, sharing responsibility for success, having collegiality (joint working through mutual sharing and assistance), continuous improvement, lifelong learning, risk-taking, support, mutual respects, openness and celebration and humour.

Stoll and Mortimore (1997) suggest that successful interventions or innovations in schools meet a need, are clear, complex and of high quality. The various school improvement activities need to interlink so that the action plan is coherent (Stoll and Fink, 1996). As well as being compatible with the schools’ culture and readiness for change, innovations need to take into account teachers’ needs, skills, concerns, interests and psychological states. They outline the difficulty in generalising routes to improvement given the individual contexts and cultures of schools. However, they do draw out some ‘openings’. These are summarised in Figure 2, Appendix 1.

Hopkins et al (1994) identify key elements in recovery as being:

1. *Quality of teaching* - including training and the attitude of the staff and their commitment to change;

2. *Leadership* - critical to the success of the school – persuading everyone to share the ownership of the vision;
3. *The Governing Body* - through friendly and sympathetic critique in monitoring the action plan.

Reviews of failing schools and of schools which have removed themselves from Special Measures have been published, including Ofsted's "Lessons learned from Special Measures" which looks at the experiences of the first 250 schools to be removed from special measures (Ofsted, 1999a). Her Majesty's Inspectorate identify a range of key factors which assist schools in special measures, although stating that each school will need to identify its own individual package of factors and support. These include getting started with action planning having come to terms with the label given, celebrating pupils' achievements, improving behaviour and attendance, focusing on teaching – on planning and assessment, leadership, involvement of school governors and parents, effective use of external support and planning for life after special measures. An omission would appear to be celebrating the achievements of staff alongside those of their pupils.

Gersch (1996) emphasises the importance of the feelings, attitudes and emotional responses of teachers in determining the effectiveness of outcomes of any interventions and calls for the recognition and support of teachers' emotional needs in the promotion of change. The increase on teacher stress is of concern because of its effect on the reliability of Ofsted inspectors judgements and the effect it has on the rest of the teachers performance and their well-being. This assignment will now go on to consider teacher stress, its causes (including inspection) and the impact that this can have on improvement.

3.3. Emotional Stress for Teachers

There is a growing body of research looking at teacher stress, including national recognition through the NUT survey (National Union of Teachers) published in the Times Educational Supplement (1994), where 40% of teachers described Ofsted Inspections as "additionally stressful". Given Gersch's (1996) emphasis on recognising the emotional needs of teachers, it is important that in working with schools before, during and after Ofsted inspections, LEA staff have an understanding of these needs. These will include having an understanding of

key stressors for staff, the impact stress can have on teacher behaviour and effectiveness and how we are able to support teachers in managing their stress. Finally LEA staff must ensure that as outside agents working with teachers, they are not adding to the burden and increasing their stress levels.

It is important for schools in the first instance, to understand the impact of several factors on teacher stress. These include:

- *The health of the organisation.* Healthy organisational functioning, including, for example good communication and collegiality, decreases teacher stress and linked to this;
- *Good leadership and management;*
- *The impact of change.* A constantly shifting agenda increases teacher stress;
- *The impact of teacher-pupil interaction and classroom climate.*

From Kyriacou, (2001)

Considering more specifically the experience of Inspection, Brimblecombe, Ormston and Shaw (1995) carried out a national questionnaire survey and interviews looking at classteachers' experiences of Ofsted Inspections. They surveyed 821 teachers and interviewed 30 teachers in 5 secondary schools. Brimblecombe et al (1995) highlight the extensive preparations in schools following official notification of date of inspection, including reviews of practice and revision of policy documents. Brimblecombe et al highlight the factors which increase classteachers' stress including additional pressures generated by leadership and management for example, through last minute changes to documentation or by being told not to say anything which will implicate or blame another member of staff. Classteachers were likely to experience more stress than managers as they were not involved in planning and so were less familiar with the inspection process.

Kyriacou's (1987) research looking into factors which teachers perceived as stressors included low status and lack of control, which can both be seen to be important for classteachers in the Inspection process. During the Inspection, Brimblecombe et al (op cit.) found that the attitude of Senior Managers was again important. An attitude of "take us as you find us" and that identification of

weaknesses as areas for the school to work on, were useful, helped staff feel more secure. During inspection, teachers were found to prepare carefully for lessons and to use a more didactic approach. This was because teachers hoped to be more in control of the lesson, although paradoxically this resulted in the inspector seeing more of the teachers' behaviour than they might in a more active lesson, which resulted in increased stress.

The behaviour of the Inspectors was influential in setting the level of teacher stress. In Brimblecombe et al's research, 92% of Inspectors were described positively, but one more difficult experience with an Inspector could have a very strong negative effect. It was felt that new Inspectors particularly might be nervous and stressed themselves and therefore might appear aloof. A teacher who then reacted rudely might produce a negative reaction from the Inspector and so conflict could occur. Teacher stress was reported to be increased by the Inspector arriving in the middle of a lesson when staff felt that they might not see the context of the lesson.

End of Inspection week includes individual feedback and grades being given to all staff observed and feedback being given to the headteacher and Chair of Governors, plus a date being set to speak to the governing body at a later date. Brimblecombe et al's research suggested that staff absenteeism was high in the week after Inspection. Teacher stress was increased by the lack of feedback from the Inspectors after lesson observations and by the anonymity of the reports where teachers were afraid of being identified as the "weak teacher" or labelled as being "weak" when in fact they had received good judgements about the quality of their teaching. Dean (1995) found that feedback from the Inspectors was felt to be a key issue. Dean held interviews and group discussions in primary and secondary schools after 14 Inspections and found that teachers felt that if they had been observed, then they were entitled to feedback.

Ferguson et al (2000) found that the time taken to recover from Inspection week and to generate enthusiasm for post-Ofsted Action Planning, varied. Headteachers and governors may be keen to get on with action planning with a staff who are stressed and exhausted. Dean (1995) quoted a Headteacher "in the two weeks following Inspection the staff had been absolutely exhausted from the stress they had experienced" (p.51). Staff may be absent and lack

motivation to embark on action planning. If the result of the inspection was Special Measures or serious weakness, especially where this was unexpected, staff were also likely to experience defensive feelings alongside the pain and despair of the grieving process.

Teachers therefore experience an increase in their stress levels through inspection and, particularly where schools receive a less positive inspection judgement, staff are unlikely to be able to participate in action planning and effectively promote positive change immediately after inspection without support.

3.4. Who can support schools in change?

The assignment will now go on to consider roles that can be played in supporting schools causing concern before a discussion of the role of Educational Psychologists is held in the final section.

Ferguson (2000) cites Freire (1973, p.13) in considering how those on whom solutions are imposed tend to “give in to disheartenment and feelings of inferiority”. He comments on the lack of effectiveness of these imposed solutions given the lack of critical analysis of the context and the lack of adaptation to that context. Ferguson (2000) argues for someone within the situation to find solutions, but argues too that someone within the situation may be too embroiled. Ferguson suggests that someone who is within the school, yet detached, may be most effective.

Fullan (1991) describes how teachers already struggling to cope with the everyday classroom – management, raising standards of pupil performance, unexpected pressure from dealing with young people – are then handed demands for change. Unsurprisingly, the staff resist external pressures in order to survive. Fullan questions whether an already stressed system can cope with change. In this case, Fullan argues for the need for an external force to help to implement changes, to work with staff and to have a shared vision. Fullan suggests the development of a working group who understand the implications of the proposed changes and are supported through follow-up.

MacBeath (Improving School Effectiveness Project, 1998) considers Joyce (1991)’s analogy of interconnected doors to consider their experience of working

with schools as critical friends, searching for a key to an unlocking of doorways to change. They also draw upon Covey's (1989) analysis of a man sawing a tree who is becoming increasingly inefficient and tired, but says that he is too busy sawing to stop and sharpen the blade. MacBeath draws this analogy to teachers who are too busy teaching to think about learning and too busy to share what they know.

3.4.1. The role of a Critical Friend

MacBeath (1998) discusses this role in relation to supporting schools. He describes the critical friend as "a successful marrying of unconditional support and unconditional critique" (p. 118). The literature highlights contradictions between the success of bringing these two roles together, against separating them and having a separate inspection and advisory (support) service.

MacBeath describes the lack of success of separating these two functions, with two systems which together fail to be friendly or objective. Ferguson et al (2000) however outline the challenge of any one system trying to deliver both functions and conclude that they need to be separated. MacBeath goes on to look at the role and the challenge that it produces in working with failing schools.

MacBeath discusses the work completed in the Improving School Effectiveness Project in Scotland (MacBeath and Mortimore, 1994; Robertson and Sammons, 1996). This work involved 80 schools, 24 of which were designated as case-study schools with which the team entered into research and development over a two year period. In the project, two workers were attached to each school as researcher and as critical friend. Their two roles were described as follows:

"The job of the researcher was to observe, interview and document, including a critical appraisal of the actions and impact of the critical friend. The role of the researcher was to be a credible commentator and a faithful witness. The role of the friend was to be both of these but also a listener and learner, a knowledgeable broker and a resilient critic." (p.119)

The team entered the school via the Headteacher and senior management team. Macbeath highlights a number of issues in working with schools in this way which are useful for anyone working closely with schools to consider. These are presented in Figure 3 in Appendix 1. The team reported that the role of

critical friend becomes comfortable and accepted although at different times with different members of staff within the school.

The formal agenda outlined by the project appears to overlap considerably with a consultancy or project work approach which might be taken to working with a school by a team of EP's. The approach included an introduction, gathering data, organising and feeding back data, making sense of data, considering options, supporting initiatives, helping to embed initiatives within the school's structures and evaluating work undertaken. There was also an informal agenda of actions, which included background reading, familiarisation with the school, negotiating a role, building alliances, facilitating, monitoring, challenging, maintaining momentum and disengaging.

MacBeath highlights that critical friends themselves, whilst working with schools in this way, require support and he outlines suggestions centring on the opportunity to share and make explicit:

- Personal criteria for effectiveness;
- Examples of success when the criteria above have been met;
- When it was difficult to meet these criteria, i.e. when feelings of ineffectiveness, frustration and failure were experienced;
- Expectations which others have – are they legitimate?
- Managing the boundaries between friends and critic, adviser and facilitator;
- Advice and guidance on what to do, or what to do next time.

3.4.2. Involvement of external consultants

Learmonth and Lowers (1998) consider the role of external consultants in working with schools in difficulties. They outline how they do not carry the luggage of the school's management or the LEAs perceived lack of support. However, they stress the importance of getting to know the particular school and its circumstances. They discuss the vulnerability of early relationships and the need for clarity about who is employing the consultant and for what purpose, clarity about boundaries of confidentiality and roles with other bodies such as the LEA and governing body. A role which explicitly reflects a priority of the school's development or Action plan can provide coherence.

Learmonth and Lowers underline three processes as key in supporting a school's development:

1. Reaffirm the importance of each lesson to build the confidence and skills of teaching staff. Shifting responsibility and power back to teaching staff who, along with the pupils, are members of the school community with a strong influence on impacting the judgements made about teaching and learning. Dissemination of good practice, tracking pupils and encouraging mutual observation and peer mentoring are useful strategies.
2. Evidence based practice rather than anecdote. Bringing evidence from other schools and advocating for the collection of evidence within the school, to shape policy and practice.
3. Building an alternative vision of what the school could be like and of pupils reaching new levels of attainment. Staff in failing schools usually feel disempowered, trapped and misunderstood. They may also feel that government legislation acts against them and against efforts to change their culture and to raise standards.

The assignment will now go on to consider possible roles for Educational Psychologists working with schools causing concern, drawing on the research highlighted above.

4. Integration of theory, research and practice

If we consider schools as existing to promote children's learning and to help them to achieve, we can see that some schools are successful (as judged by their attainments, Ofsted Inspections, LEA judgements) whilst others are not. Where Educational Psychologists are trying to support schools who are not doing well, to improve, the question therefore becomes "what is the role of educational psychologists and how can they help these schools to improve?"

The above research has reviewed some of the influences on schools in difficulties and has suggested that often schools in difficulties require or benefit from involvement from outside in supporting staff in moving forward and developing change. It would seem to be important for this support to be facilitating the school's own development rather than imposing structures and strategies from outside.

This assignment will now go on to consider the role of educational psychologists in this work, what unique contribution of skills and knowledge the profession can bring, what the constraints are and whether the profession needs further training and development to support this work.

4.1 The role of Educational Psychologists

Gillham (1999) reflects on the development of the profession and emphasises the change which occurred in professional practice. This change was a move from working with individual children to working with the systems around them - the "perception that if we were to help children, we had to change what happened to them by adding, taking away and altering elements of their social and personal systems – elements outside as well as within them" (p220). If working with whole schools systems is seen as a way of changing what happens to several or many children, then it can be argued that there is a role for Educational Psychologists in school improvement work.

Beaver (1996) looks to the Educational Psychologist's role, working with individual children, to identify potential initiatives for change in the system of adults within the child's world. He argues that the psychological skills required are those of the ability to create change in the attitudes and behaviour of adults, in changing the functioning of the systems around the child, in order to enable the child to change.

Burden (1999) outlines the development of the Exeter training course for Educational Psychologists which included school-focused projects and early systems working with schools. He comments that he "finds it difficult to understand how and why EP's allowed themselves to be marginalised in all of school effectiveness and school improvement when they had so much to offer" (p.228). Leadbetter (1999) conducted an interview with Tim Brighouse, (Director of Education, Birmingham City Council) looking at the role of Educational Psychologists and the development of the profession. He expressed the view that in authorities where strides were being made in school effectiveness and school improvement, then this had been initiated or developed through dialogue between officers and Educational Psychologists. He discussed the importance of EP's being built into Education Development Plans, within proposals to

support school improvement, as well as to raise achievement. This, he argued, would result in a broadening of the role of Educational Psychologists. He also discussed the development of careers for EPs within Advisory services and within organisational development services.

However, looking at current practice, Leyden (1999) describes his 'straw poll' of ex-Educational Psychologist colleagues and the finding that the majority said that their time was dominated by individual assessment and advice-giving and by writing formal assessments with the purpose of allocating resources to children or children to resources (special schooling). He suggests the need to once again "re-formulate our role from rubber-stamping failure to promoting inclusion and achievement for all pupils" (p.222). Leyden frames the same point in needing to develop knowledge and skills in other areas of Applied Psychology to become solution rather than problem-focussed. He makes the point that EP Services cannot assume that they will continually be retained as part of the LEA unless they can begin to provide hard evidence that they make a significant and cost-effective difference to the LEA's Special Educational Needs and also School Improvement Strategies. Indeed, the DFES' agenda for increasing devolvement of budgets to schools and the narrowing role of the LEA to having a monitoring and quality standards role may produce an increasing pressure for the buying-in of external consultancy services, even for these formally centrally-held functions. Leyden suggests that EP's need to have a strategic role within LEA's leading evaluations and feeding back from practice into strategy and policy.

However, it seems that the profession is failing to grasp the nettle of truly reformulating the EP's role. Whether the new Code of Practice and the increasing devolvement of funding to schools for supporting children with Special educational Needs in mainstream schools will result in a decreased role for Educational Psychologists in statutory assessment, remains to be seen.

Jennings (1995) used a questionnaire to explore the perceptions of principal EP's in the London Area about the roles, tasks and contexts of EP work. There was no mention of school improvement work from the Principal EPs. Their ideas for future priorities were in the areas of child protection, early years and family work. The researcher then asked the PEP's to rank 14 different aspects of EP work in order of priority now and also in the future. Group work with staff,

organisational development techniques and research and evaluation techniques were all included and were all judged to decrease in importance between 1995 and the future. Depressingly, the PEP's ranked statutory and casework as the most important aspects of work and increasing in importance.

The research Report looking at the current role, good practice and future directions of Educational Psychology Services (Kelly & Gray, 2000) introduces the current role of EP's as having become increasingly involved in the process of statutory assessment of children's special educational needs. It outlines that the training of EP's is to apply psychology to promote the attainment and healthy emotional development of all children and young people from 0-19 years (and what better way to begin to achieve this than working with whole school systems?). The report outlines that schools do recognise that EP's have an understanding of school organisation and of how schools work. Contribution to school development was commented upon (p.29), although it is noted that few schools reported having support from their EP's in bringing about organisational change (despite the majority of EP Services reported assisting schools with organisational change!).

Project work and development of pastoral schemes had occurred with EP involvement in a small minority of cases and more commonly (50% of schools) in the development of behaviour management, working with other agencies to support the school. The research found that many EPS' are involved in work which contributes to raising standards of achievement and supporting government policies, particularly on inclusion and social inclusion. LEA's see educational psychologists as key agents for change and there are many creative projects initiated and driven forward by EPS'.

Schools report a lack of clarity and duplication of roles of different support services, between LEA Advisory Services, support services, EPS' and other agencies. The paper outlines how EP's want to see more emphasis on their role in problem-solving and preventative work at a range of levels although these skills are not 'advertised' to schools who therefore do not perceive the breadth of EP work. Similarly although EP time is seen to be freed up to work preventatively through working with schools to empower teachers and develop skills and knowledge, lack of overall EP time constrains this.

Future priorities included:

- A greater focus on preventative work (although LEAs continue to see work related to statutory assessment as a continuing priority);
- Consultation and problem-solving;
- Service Level Agreements to clarify roles and ensure monitoring of service delivery;
- Supporting the Government's education agenda as part of an LEA;
- Providing more EP time for schools who would buy in more EP support if they could;
- Increased work with social services for looked after children;
- Increased work with Social Services and Health for joint assessments, planning and provision;
- An increase in specialisms.

In this report it outlines that schools do not see a major role for Educational Psychologists in wider school development work, usually because this is seen to be the role of the LEA Advisory service. However, schools do see a role for EPs within target setting (at a group or school level), project work (particularly to increase social inclusion), school-based multi-agency planning meetings, behaviour management and support and training. Schools did acknowledge the importance of an EP playing the role of "critical friend" to the school, where there is clarity around the role and the school understands that the EP is there to challenge the school, at the same time providing advice and support to help bring about the improvement needed.

LEAs were also consulted about the role of EPs and possible future directions. As discussed above, involvement in statutory assessment remained a priority, alongside working with schools to support children with special educational needs. An increase in working with parents, with early years, with schools on social inclusion and wider involvement in LEA work were also highlighted. There is no specific discussion about contributing to school improvement work.

4.1. Multi-agency support

With the drive towards multi-agency meetings in many areas, including supporting schools causing concern, work needs to be completed to ensure that

this method of working is the most effective for these schools. The approach seems inherently sensible in bringing together those supporting a school to ensure that a pragmatic and planned approach is taken rather than the school accepting advice from many different people, pulling them in different directions without the agreement of priorities for action. Groups working together in this way require clear purpose at the start of involvement and success criteria together with clear process for monitoring and evaluation so that the effectiveness of the partnerships can truly be measured.

Atkinson, Wilkin, Stott and Kinder (2001) have audited multi-agency working across 221 initiatives in 117 Local Education Authorities. They summarised the benefits of multi-agency working as including improved understanding of roles and responsibilities, improved communication and information sharing and better working relationships. Strategic-level benefits as well as improved support for individual pupils were highlighted. Key factors in success included commitment from those involved, having a person to lead or drive, clear focus, shared aims and resources and joint ownership of the work. Challenges were also studied. These included resourcing, the need for more time, different cultures and perspectives. However, this report was compiled from individual interviews with staff involved in the specific projects and was not truly evaluatory in nature. It may however provide a helpful basis for considering further the role of multi-agency working.

4.2. If Educational Psychologists are involved, what can they do?

The research of Fullan (1991), Ferguson (2000) and MacBeath (1998) seems to suggest that some schools, particularly those in possession of a 'damning Ofsted judgement' need external support in bringing about change. They suggest that a critical friend or external consultant from outside the school may be helpful in stimulating improvement, working closely with the school system.

Beaver (1996) considers the role of the EP in relation to working within systems around individual children and considers the role of the EP without being a full member of the system. He emphasises the ability of the psychologist to have a 'meta' perspective of the system, so being in a prime position to look at the wider system around the child. Beaver identifies two critical elements of the

psychologist's role, those of rapport skills and conceptualising the change process.

Beaver considers the influence of rapport skills, in enabling people to work together, share objectives and attain solutions. He describes the importance of rapport, in that however valuable the psychologists hypotheses or how effective the proposed solutions, they will have little effect if the rapport between the workers is not such that the ideas will be heard, taken ownership of and worked with. Beaver then goes on to look at the three phases of change, hypothesising and information gathering, intervention and review. It is these particular aspects which define the role of the psychologist within specific situations of school development.

The psychologist will use particular theoretical models to provide a framework for asking questions, for understanding the information gathered and for generating hypotheses. The psychologist is likely to bring different perspectives and hypotheses to the system as well as an ability to look towards solutions. There are different models of problem-solving, for example, Robinson's (1993) Problem-based Methodology, Cameron & Stratford, (1987). Beaver cites Ravenette (1992) who suggests that the chief tool of the psychologist is the question and that each question is a potential intervention. The psychologist will use the theoretical model chosen and the hypotheses generated to identify possible solutions. The psychologist supports the identification of achievable interventions, and has an awareness of the importance of gaining the commitment of members of the system, as well as identifying ways in which success will be identified.

Gillham outlines the unique contribution of Educational Psychologists to systems work, as an understanding of change, of how and where it can be achieved. He describes the psychologist's professional tools as conceptual and methodological approaches and the ability to be able to construct understanding and practice wherever and whomever one is working with. He describes the expertise of the EP as being able to work with other people in their physical and psychological territory.

Leyden (1999) suggests the approach of using models of school development which combine an understanding of subjective pupil and teacher systems when

trying to solve problems made up of people. The context of the school also needs to be right to support change and improvement. Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology is given as an example of such an approach (Checkland & Scholes, 1990).

Leyden also cites tutoring, dynamic assessment, 'Circle of Friends' (Newton, Taylor and Wilson, 1996) and other strategies to support inclusion as strategies which are already used by Educational Psychologists in supporting learning and boosting educational achievement.

Gillham (1999) underlines that major problems are likely to be complex and need long-term work rather than a quick solution. He describes his own 4 year work with an inner-city centre school where he is working with the school, "actively constructing our own professional knowledge of what happens in that school community" (p.228). He outlines that what is achieved working with the school, needs to be maintained and that interventions produced quickly and then left with a school are likely to fail as the effects are unlikely to become embedded within the school

Labram (1996) looks at the role of Educational Psychologists as consultants and draws the distinction between process consultancy and technical consultancy. In process consultancy, the consultant helps the members of the organisation to diagnose their own problems, arrive at solutions, implement and evaluate them. The consultant passes on skills of problem-solving, intervention planning and implementation to the consultee. In technical consultancy, the consultant brings expert knowledge and skills to help resolve a specific problem. This requires accurate diagnosis of the problem so that the appropriate expertise and solution can be offered by the consultant. Labram considers that EPs have a lot of knowledge which can be used in technical consultancy, for example about Special Educational Needs, about behaviour management and about LEA provision, but they may have less expertise for involvement in process consultancy. He suggests the need for EPs to have a wider range of skills for consultation to be delivered in initial training so that we can more viably offer a wider range of consultancy in our work with schools. The kinds of problems faced by schools in difficulties would seem to be more appropriately supported through a process consultation model, where the members of the organisation retain ownership of the problem and the solutions, than technical consultancy

where the diagnosis of the problem, needs as above, to be clearly defined. It seems that this is rarely the case in school improvement work.

Fox and Sigston (1996) reflect upon the role of EPs in organisational development and suggest that the profession has not drawn upon other relevant areas of expertise outside special educational needs, for example from organisational psychology, in order to be more effective in meeting systemic needs. Fox and Sigston look at four possible areas for educational psychologist involvement in organisational change. The first of these is INSET where the educational psychologist, as the expert in the field, teaches skills and knowledge to teachers with the assumption that this will impact on their classroom practice. This has more recently been criticised as a model for driving change as it is shown that INSET rarely leads to changes in practice unless supported and followed up by other strategies.

The second strand for EP's involvement is through providing a process for change which the school applies to a specific area of work. The two strategies above are based on an action research model, where change can be achieved and learning developed through research and through the development of theory and knowledge. The approach taken by action researchers is also seen to be more appropriate for the complex multi-factorial social settings in which EP's work, for example schools and classrooms.

The third strand is organisational development which assumes that the human potential to respond to change can be developed. The work envelopes the theory of Lewin (1959) that there is a three-step model for change which includes unfreezing (e.g. through an educative process) followed by change within the system and finally the refreezing of these new actions brought about by change. The fourth strand is process consultancy, where, as outlined above, the consultant comes to the process with an open agenda on the content and method of the change. The educational psychologist becomes the facilitator of change rather than the expert.

Fox and Sigston argue that Educational Psychologists are well-placed amongst educational professionals to act as process consultants. They suggest that EP's have the foundation skills of observing how people interact in organisations and being able to help members of the organisation to understand it better. However,

many EP's lack direct experience of this approach and may require further professional development, opportunities for shadowing and support in developing the confidence, skills and competencies to deliver this approach with schools in difficulties.

4.2.1. *Stress and teachers*

Leyden (1999) uses teacher stress as an illustration of a school improvement strategy. High levels of teacher stress are recognised as damaging to the health of the teacher and also the effective functioning of the school. Decreasing teacher stress may therefore, in some cases be an approach to improving a school's functioning. Support from EP's can include advice for teachers before Inspections – what to expect, how to manage the inspectors and how to manage SEN. After inspections, support from EP's can include emotional support and recognition of feelings before and through Action Planning.

Specific strategies for reducing stress may also be helpful for staff. Gersch (1996) suggests the following as effective strategies: working under supervision, maintaining boundaries between work and home, having an action plan, constructing lists and having priorities, having a sympathetic adult support or mentor, leisure activities, treats and hobbies outside work. He recognises the need for staff to feel safe, well-managed and clear about their work and the role of leadership and management in ensuring this.

4.2.2. *Work in other Authorities*

Curran and Fuller (2001) have presented a paper outlining the collaborative approach taken to school improvement in Essex LEA. Curran and Fuller argue that EP's have a distinct set of competencies and skills to contribute to multi-disciplinary teams working towards consultancy and to organisational change work within schools. In the Essex Primary School Improvement (EPSI) programme, Senior EP's worked alongside School Development Advisers (SDA's) to support a junior or primary school in making improvement on an identified focus area. The activities, roles and skills utilised by the EPs were drawn from interviews with EPs, SDA's and schools and are summarised below.

Figure 4: The activities, roles and skills used by Senior EP's in the EPSI programme in Essex.

| Supporting the Improvement Process | Data collection and analysis |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairing and facilitating groups and leading staff meetings • Problem analysis • Problem-solving, negotiation and team-building skills • Promotion of the selection of a focus for improvement • Keeping up momentum and pace • Reviewing progress and planning actions • A listening ear for the Headteacher • Support and challenge for leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing externally generated data, (e.g. pupil and staff interviews, lesson observations) • Analysis of data and feedback • Supporting Headteacher in use of data • Advice on development of whole school survey and on interpretation of results • Advice re use of statistics • Analysis of pupil achievement and perception data with school staff |
| Specialist knowledge | Joint working (EP and SDA) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Assessment • Psychology of organisations and management theory • SEN methodology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of common understanding • Sharing different methodologies • Challenging dialogue • Joint development of INSET • Complimentary perspectives and actions |

The programme also involved programme teams who worked together, including on development days so that they could learn together about school improvement as well as learning from each others' experiences, hence also supporting the development of a healthy culture within the LEA's support systems for schools causing concern.

The generic patch EPs are involved in school improvement work through additional time allocated to schools causing concern, for support for whole school issues related to those identified by Ofsted (Laws, 2001). Cross-Directorate meetings are held on a termly basis for each school and these are attended by the Senior EP who holds responsibility for this area of work. The purpose of these meetings is to develop a shared action plan and to plan and update each other on the work which is developing in the schools. The link EPs have an annual meeting with their schools to pull together an overview of the year's work, including whole school issues.

4.2.3. *Within the Author's Authority*

Guidelines have now been established for EPs supporting schools causing concern (see appendix 3) to establish greater clarity about what can be offered and about how EPs share information about schools and remain within boundaries of confidentiality. A similar system has been taken to that used in Essex, with additional time being allocated to schools identified as causing concern, either through Ofsted or through LEA procedures. This is based on a three tier system of concern as used by the Advisory service, where primary schools in the category of least concern will have one additional visit allocated from the EP and the school is supported by termly review meetings with LEA staff. In an increasing number of cases, the EP attached to the school is being asked to attend review meetings focusing on particular aspects of the school, for example, Special Educational needs or behaviour management, alongside staff from the Specialist Teaching, Behaviour Support, Minority Ethnic and Traveller Achievement Service and Education Welfare services. More time is allocated as schools fall within the Serious Weaknesses and Special Measures categories and correspondingly for secondary schools falling into these three categories. A more detailed system may need to be established to allocate EP time for school improvement work, depending on evaluation of the approach taken this year. The EPS has re-established the allocation of EP time for the development of project work with schools and again this will be targeted towards schools causing concern. EP's are being encouraged to make suggestions and to prompt schools identified as causing concern to jointly develop bids for time from that allocated to project work (1 session per week for full time equivalent EP's) and to work with other agencies where appropriate. Liaison with the Advisory service to ensure clarity of support for the schools is ongoing although as the project bids ask explicitly for the school to link the work with their improvement plan, development plan or post-Ofsted Action plan, it is hoped that this process will be clear. A difficulty for the service currently, is the timing of the allocation of this work, as the identification of specific needs in schools and the writing of school and LEA action plans rarely occurs at one point in the year. There is also a need to review the balance of this work with current requirements for involvement with individual child assessments and our statutory role, in light of pressures on staffing.

The need to continue to improve understanding and joint working between EP's and Advisors also remains and the need to share information, especially in action planning and working together to plan interventions for schools. The emphasis on the involvement of the Educational Psychology Service in the writing of the new EDP, with the Chief EP and Head of learning Support attending the strategic group and with the Senior EP (School Improvement) being part of the operational group, will provide opportunities for ensuring that the EPS, alongside other support services, are represented within the EDP in school improvement work as well as within the more traditional 'tackling the attainment gap' section of the new EDP. The author would see a need for the Advisory service and the Educational Psychology service to look together, through joint training and action, at planning interventions for schools causing concern and at evaluating interventions put in place, in individual schools and more widely throughout the Local Education Authority.

4. Concluding Comments

From the research evidence discussed, there would seem to be a role for Educational Psychologists in working with schools causing concern. However, in order to be effective and to measure EP effectiveness, there would appear to be a need for further professional development, especially in the light of the value of process consultancy skills, depending on an EP's personal training and experience. Educational psychologists need to have the motivation to develop a wider role than that taken in the past with individual children and to be able to advocate that role with schools and other LEA staff, for example, in order to benefit a wider number of children. There is also a need for Educational Psychologists to publicise their skills more widely with schools and with the LEA in order to be able to free time to work with schools in more creative and holistic ways. This will be made more easy by planned and effective evaluation of work undertaken, through clarification of initial requirements and work to be undertaken.

Educational Psychologists need to work collaboratively with other Officers of the LEA to support the LEA in meeting the requirements of the EDP and in supporting the School Improvement agenda. In order to do this, Educational Psychologists need to be clear about their role and unique contribution in working collaboratively with these other professionals – to maintain their

professional status and to remain within ethical and code of conduct requirements. Educational Psychologists have a unique contribution to offer in terms of having an understanding of change, of organisational functioning (particularly in relation to schools) a clear understanding of child development and of the teaching and learning processes. They also have key skills, developed through training and continuing professional development in problem-solving, in stress management and offering therapeutic support and also at a more foundation level, highly developed interpersonal skills.

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APPENDIX

1. Figures 1-3 as referred to in text:

Figure 1: Summary of factors for school effectiveness and school improvement (Stoll & Mortimore, 1997, pp.18-19)

Figure 2: Routes to improvement in schools (Stoll and Mortimore, 1997)

Figure 3: Issues highlighted from working with schools as a critical friend (MacBeath, 1998)

- 2. Account of work carried out in a school in Special Measures in the Author's LEA. Co-written with Norah Frederickson and Sonia Sharp and published in Educational Psychology in Practice, vol.17, no.1 (2001)**
- 3. Review of EP involvement with Ofsted inspection in LEA completed in October 2000.**
- 4. New draft Guidelines for EP's working in the Author's service for working with schools causing concern.**

APPENDIX 1

Figure 1: Summary of factors for school effectiveness and school improvement (Stoll & Mortimore, 1997, pp.18-19)

| | School Effectiveness (the final picture) | School Improvement (facilitating conditions) |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Participatory leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Firm and purposeful ▪ A participative approach ▪ The leading professional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Headteacher as motivator and guide ▪ Teacher involvement in leadership roles and decision-making ▪ Teachers as change agents |
| Shared vision and goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unity of purpose ▪ Consistent practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision-building ▪ Use of evolutionary planning process ▪ Working for the whole school's good |
| Teamwork | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collegiality and collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher involvement and empowerment ▪ Opportunities for collaboration and collegiality |
| A learning environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An orderly atmosphere ▪ An attractive working environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orderly and secure environment ▪ A positive ethos ▪ A place where 'risk-taking' is encouraged |
| Emphasis on teaching and learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximum learning time ▪ Academic emphasis ▪ Achievement focus ▪ Efficient organisation ▪ Clarity of purpose ▪ Structured lessons ▪ Adaptive practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A focus central to teachers' and pupils' concerns ▪ Varied and appropriate repertoire ▪ Teachers learning and practising new strategies |
| High expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High expectations for all ▪ Expectations communicated ▪ Intellectual challenge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High expectations about adults and pupils ▪ Aspirations and success criteria shared |
| Positive reinforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear and fair discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behaviour policy maintained |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> and monitored ▪ Celebration ▪ Appreciation and recognition of teachers ▪ Capturing teacher enthusiasm |
| Monitoring and enquiry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring pupil performance ▪ Evaluating school performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting, monitoring and evaluating success criteria ▪ Classroom research techniques used by teachers ▪ Ongoing review and necessary adaptation |
| Pupil rights and responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High pupil self-esteem ▪ Positions of responsibility ▪ Control of work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement of pupil in management of learning ▪ Eliciting pupils' views |
| Learning for all | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School-based staff development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers as continuing learners ▪ Coaching and mentoring ▪ Peer observation and feedback ▪ 'Critical friendships' |
| Partnerships and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parental involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schemes to involve parents and community ▪ External support ▪ Developing networks and clusters |

Figure 2: Routes to improvement in schools (Stoll & Mortimore, 1997). These openings, are helpful in suggesting good ideas for targeting or focusing interventions for change, but they do not give a framework for action. They are described in applicable knowledge terms rather than in actionable knowledge terms. Further advice and structure in terms of how to put these openings into effective action would prove helpful.

| Within schools | External to schools |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collegiality – cohesive and professional relationships within and beyond schools and efforts to improve culture. • Research – studying and suing findings on school effectiveness and school improvement • Self-evaluation – the collection and analysis of school and pupil data, action research in classrooms and appraisal. • Curriculum – Introduction of self-chosen or cross-curricular projects • Teaching and Learning – the development of skills and strategies • Partnerships – involving parents, community representatives and agencies, LEA, business, industry, higher education institutions and educational consultants • School development planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection • Provision of value-added data • External projects, e.g. lead by the LEA • Quality projects, e.g. Investors in People • National Curriculum and associated assessments |

Figure 3: Issues highlighted from working with schools as a critical friend (MacBeath, 1998)

| Issues |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different lenses through which to view the school • Can become cosy in a mutual comfort zone • Perception of others about whose friend you are seen to be and the impact of this on effectiveness, • Confirming or confronting expectations • Signalling impartiality • Negotiation of role • Ensuring staff retain ownership of new developments • School's developmental stage – and that of different pockets within the school • Whether involvement was a decision of the whole school staff or just SMT • Skill in empathy - understanding what it feels like to receive critical feedback – delivering advice and challenge skilfully • Skills in dealing with data and presenting data • Skills in analysis and inference • Interpersonal skills in group work – accurate listening, feeding back reflecting back, working within the clients frame of reference, challenging and resolving conflict • Working directly with upset headteachers |

APPENDIX 2

SUPPORTING A SCHOOL ON SPECIAL MEASURES : IMPLICATIONS FOR THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Susan Bettle, Norah Frederickson, Sonia Sharp

SUMMARY

The following article describes the experiences of an Educational Psychologist (E.P.) attached to a school requiring special measures following its Ofsted Inspection in October 1997. Requests for increased E.P. time were met with a specific piece of project work looking at the ethos of the school and relationships within it. The article draws out the strengths which E.P.s can bring to working with schools in Special Measures. These include a psychological knowledge base, skills in systems analysis and project evaluation, the delivery of training and working within a multi-agency setting. The article suggests that this is an important area of work to which E.P.s can make a contribution.

Schools in Special Measures

"The Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993 together provide for a new system of regular independent inspection of schools" (Circular, 17/93). Inspections have a specific function in reporting on the quality of education provided by schools, the educational standards achieved, the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the children and whether the financial resources available to the school are managed efficiently (Ofsted, 1993).

Where a Registered Inspector or HMI identify that a school is failing, or is likely to fail to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education then the school can be placed in "Special Measures". This then triggers specific provision.

The school is required to produce an Action Plan "setting out the proposed response to the inspection report" (17/93) and where a school is in Special Measures, the Local Education Authority (L.E.A.) must then produce a commentary on the schools plan as well as a statement of the action that it proposes to take to support that school. This may take the form of additional resources or specific support, the appointment of an additional Governor or the

supervision of the school's right to a delegated budget so that the L.E.A. can retain some control.

Ofsted monitor the school's progress towards the implementation of the Action Plan and also monitors the effectiveness of the L.E.A. support, (DfEE, June 1998). Where a school has been in Special Measures for over two years and removal from that category is not imminent, the Secretary of State will expect the L.E.A. to make plans to close the school quickly.

The Role of Educational Psychologists in Working with Schools in Special Measures

Experience would suggest that a link Educational Psychologist (E.P.) working with a school recently placed in Special Measures may be faced with requests for more time and an overwhelming feeling of "where to start" in supporting the school. Staff morale is likely to be low as the staff realise that not only have they undergone a difficult inspection and faced a critical judgement and report, but also they will now be closely monitored and judged over another two-year period.

Looking for research into the role of E.P.s in supporting these schools has not proved fruitful. The DfEE's "Road to Success : Four case studies of schools which no longer require Special Measures" (1996) describes work with four schools. There is no mention of E.P. input. "Making Headway" (Ofsted, 1998) reports on a survey of the effectiveness of strategies used by L.E.A.'s to second Headteachers into schools requiring Special Measures. This document describes the network of support around schools "a complex web of interested groups is involved wherever Special Measures are applied: Headteachers, schools staff, governors, parents, the community, advisory and inspection services, teachers unions and dioceses." Again, there is no reference to educational support staff, including E.P.s.

The Division of Educational and Child Psychology (D.E.C.P.) of the British Psychological Society has produced a document describing the general role of E.P.s. In this document the DECP lists activities which should be prominent in the work that E.P.s do. This list includes several activities which could be

undertaken with schools and L.E.A.s when a school enters Special Measures.

Examples include:

- engaging in action research that leads to increased teacher knowledge of good practice in the areas of inclusion and raising achievement;
- helping to develop knowledge and skills for teachers, learning support assistants and governors;
- assisting L.E.A.s with their education development planning so that performance is enhanced across L.E.A.s.

This paper approaches the issue from a different angle. It first provides an account of the role that Educational Psychologists played in working with one school in Special Measures. Through reflecting on some of the activities carried out, outcomes achieved and issues arising, an attempt is made to draw out implications for educational psychologists' work in this area.

The Role of Educational Psychologists in Supporting Organisational Change

When a school is identified as requiring 'special measures' there are usually substantial organisational issues that have to be addressed. These may relate to leadership and management, curriculum, behaviour and attendance or a combination of any or all of these.

Within professional journals and other publications, there are many papers describing the process of organisational change in schools and other educational settings. Fox & Sigston (1992) offer a conceptualisation of educational psychologists' involvement in organisational change within a two dimensional framework. Along one dimension a distinction is made between content and process consultancy, while the second dimension distinguishes between consultations that focus primarily on the objectives of the organisation, as opposed to those that focus on relationships within the organisation. Strategies such as INSET, action research, organisational development and soft systems methodology can readily be located within this framework. Fox and Sigston (1992) also highlight the importance for educational psychologists of considering organisational culture in their efforts to effect change. Miller (1996) describes in detail the culture of schools and the ways in which educational psychologists become part of that culture on a temporary basis whilst they

support individual teachers in achieving change. Miller identifies this creation of a new sub-culture as essential in enabling teachers to move towards successful resolution of a problem when they are located within a stable system of established school culture that can prevent them from taking necessary action. Roland and Munthe (1997) analysed the process of sustained change in schools that had been involved in tackling bullying. They noted that organised, professional assistance from outside the school was a critical factor in achieving successful and long lasting change. Roland and Munthe (op cit) were able to differentiate the outcomes for schools supported by different professional groups. They found that whilst advisers and behaviour support teachers were helpful to schools, those schools that were supported by educational psychologists were able to make more substantial and sustainable change. This should not really be surprising when one considers the knowledge base and skills of applied psychologists. The process of organisational change is underpinned by psychological theory and the understanding of this process combined with the ability to analyse systems, manage complex relationships and support others in developing solutions means that psychologists are uniquely placed to facilitate and enable change.

Lewin (1947) identified three stages of the change process. The first stage, 'unfreezing', involves people identifying and accepting the reasons for change. Once behaviours are 'unfrozen' then change can take place. To sustain change, the final stage of 'refreezing' has to occur – new behaviours are established and embedded within the organisation. Presenting data about the nature of the problems faced by the organisation can provide motivation for change and therefore help with the 'unfreezing' process. Chin and Benne (1976) have identified strategies that emphasise the factual evidence base and rationale for change as one of the three key groups of strategies for achieving successful change. The other two groups of strategies involve re-education and agreement of new norms and strategies that coerce people to change. The first two groups of strategies (empirical-rational and normative-educative) will persuade and motivate around 80 per cent of the population. The remaining 20 per cent (the 'Laggards' as described by Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971) are likely to require power-coercive approaches.

The Present Study

Background Information

< > is a shire county which is “well above average socially and economically, although there are pockets of relative disadvantage”. (Ofsted Inspection of < > L.E.A., 1999). At the time of writing, there were 201 primary schools in the county, only two of which had been identified as requiring special measures (one of these has since been removed). Nine other primary schools had been identified as having serious weaknesses.

The school involved in the present study was a middle school in a socially deprived area. Originally, the school admitted pupils from 8 -12 years of age (years 4 -7) and provided access to all children from the local area. Following changes of admissions and transfer, the age range of the school became 7-11 years of age (years 3-6). The number of pupils on roll at the time of the school's inspection was 131.

- 66 (50%) of the children were on the Special Educational Needs register.
- 1 of the children held a Statement of Special Educational Needs (Education Act, 1996).
- 34 (26%) of the pupils were eligible for free school meals.

There were 4 classes in the school, taught by 5 members of staff and supported by a team of welfare assistants. The Headteacher had been newly appointed in the preceding term.

Following the Ofsted Inspection, the report recommended that the school should be placed in special measures. An Action Plan was agreed by Governors and targets were set for six Key Issues. The Key Issue which was most relevant to the current E.P. focus was:

- “To improve significantly standards of pupils’ behaviour by developing a consistent and positive approach to behaviour management”. The Educational Psychologist was mentioned in the action plan as supporting the school in working on this target.

The Headteacher requested further E.P. time, initially in order to process more formal assessments. The Chief Psychologist discussed this with the

Headteacher and consequently they agreed that, given the key issues identified in the Action Plan, the Service should support specific initiatives relating to improving behaviour management or learning across the school. The time for this would best be accommodated, at this time of the school year, from time earmarked by the service for project work with schools and a joint planning meeting was therefore held in order to discuss possible pieces of work.

In addition, the schools' link E.P. was asked to attend a Local Task Group focusing on Special Educational Needs within the school. This task group was co-ordinated by the Area Education Officer, working closely with the school's link Advisor. The task group also involved the County Advisor for Special Educational Needs and the Head of the Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (E.B.D.) Team (a specialist support teacher who had been working in the school).

Approach and Rationale

Initial discussion with the Headteacher highlighted 'ethos in the school' as a key area for work. Exploration of the Headteacher's definition of 'ethos' established that his major area of concern was the high level of conflict and hostility between pupils. It was decided that the Educational Psychology Service would support the school in working on a project aimed at developing a more supportive and caring ethos amongst students. The Headteacher felt that many of the pupils needed to learn fundamental skills for getting along with others, valuing others as well as themselves and feeling secure and cared for in their school environment.

The project would involve 4 phases:

- Initial data collection - it was decided that two published questionnaires would be used (the 'Life in Schools Checklist'(LISC - Arora and Thompson, 1987) and the 'My Class Inventory ' (MCI - Fraser, Anderson and Walberg, 1982)) together with interviews with all school staff. The 'Life in Schools Checklist' provides indices of Bullying and Aggression in individual classes and within the school. The 'My Class Inventory' provides a profile of each class group, indicating the students' perceptions of their classroom environment. (See below). This data would be used to set a baseline.
- Feedback of the information to staff, eliciting their ideas about ways forward, enhancing their involvement and ownership of the project.

- Intervention – E.P.S. providing training for the school staff and the school developing their approach.
- Follow - up data would then be collected to provide information about progress that the school had made in moving towards a more caring ethos.

It was hoped that there would also be more long-term implications, such as curriculum planning for Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and improved behaviour management in the school.

Phase 1: Initial Data Collection

The motivation and direction for this project had stemmed entirely from the Headteacher's perceptions of the problems in peer relationships within the school. Collecting data about the actual difficulties in this area was an important starting point for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provided a 'reality check' that would enable the Headteacher's view to be confirmed or challenged. It also provided a baseline from which to work – both to enable evaluation of the impact of the project and to ensure that project design and planning were based on an understanding of the actual nature of peer relationships within the school. Finally, feedback of school based data assists the psychological process of change within the staff.

School based data also makes 'discounting' less likely. Discounting is a common psychological reaction to proposed change, whereby the person ignores or minimises aspects of the situation. In this case, despite the Headteacher's conviction of the need for change, staff may have discounted the need for change by underestimating the extent of peer hostility or by limiting it to a very small sub-group of the population.

A timetable for the initial data collection was outlined. Two members of the E.P.S. spent half a day in the school, completing the questionnaires with classes of pupils and interviewing the staff.

Staff interviews Rating scales were used (1 to 10) to gauge staff's feelings about how the children got along in their individual classes and in the school. "1" was described as "not very well at all – there are a lot of problems" and "10" was described as "very well – there are never any problems". Staff were also asked to identify changes necessary and constraints to change. Finally staff were asked

what had been tried before and what kinds of support they felt would be most useful in the future.

The My Class Inventory – Short Form (MCI-SF) consists of 25 items which can be used to measure primary-aged pupils' and teachers' perceptions of their classroom learning environment. The *MCI-SF* is a shortened version of the 38-item full scale developed by Fraser *et al* (1982). It consists of five scales, each containing 5 items whose meanings are defined as follows:

- cohesiveness - the extent to which pupils know, help and are friendly towards each other;
- friction - the extent of tension, and quarrelling amongst pupils;
- difficulty - the extent to which pupils have difficulty with the work of the class;
- competition - the extent to which the pupils perceive an atmosphere of competition in a classroom
- satisfaction - the extent to which pupils like their class;

Published data on the pupil questionnaire, together with guidance on its interpretation for educational psychologists and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's, is collated in Frederickson & Monsen (1999), which also contains a questionnaire proforma that may be copied.

The *MCI-SF* questionnaire was administered on a whole class basis. As there were concerns about the reading ability of members of the class, each question was read aloud in turn with time given for the children to mark their questionnaires by circling 'yes' or 'no'.

The My Life in School Checklist (LISC) was devised by Arora (Arora and Thompson, 1987). It is a 40-item anonymous questionnaire which includes statements describing positive events (for example, 'Another pupil was very nice to me') and negative events (for example, 'Another pupil said they'd beat me up') which have happened during the week in which the questionnaire is administered. Pupils are asked to indicate whether they have experienced each situation 'not at all', 'only once' or 'more than once' during the previous week. A Bullying Index and General Aggression Index can be calculated for each class group. Published data on the questionnaire, together with guidance on its interpretation is provided in Sharp (1999), which also contains a questionnaire proforma that may be copied. In this project each item was read to the class in turn, followed by a brief pause in which the pupils could note their responses.

Phase 2: Feedback of Information to staff

A staff meeting was held at the school where the 3 E.P.s involved fed back the initial data to staff. The information from the staff interviews was collated and fed back to staff in the form of a Rich Picture. This is a technique from Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Frederickson, 1993) which involves producing a visual representation of the E.P.'s perception of the situation based on the staff's responses. The Rich Picture produced is shown in Figure 1.

The following issues were identified:

- 10 - 20% of the children were seen to instigate the problems. These children lacked skills and support from home.
- Year 4 emerged as a particularly problematic group
- A lack of parental support and involvement.
- A lack of co-operative learning and groupwork.
- A lack of motivation and ambition to succeed in learning for some children.
- The difficulties involved in supporting the large number of children with Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.) in the classroom.
- Breaktimes were an particularly problematic. Breaktimes were often spent in dealing with difficult behaviour in the playground and working with support staff in setting targets for children with SEN.
- Staff were feeling demoralised and stressed.

The rating scales (see Table 3) indicated that staff felt that the children did not get along very well, although a wide range of values was given, especially in regard to the question about individual classes. Staff did however feel that change could be achieved.

The 'My Class Inventory' gave a profile for each class which could be compared to figures previously collected across 34 classes of 8 – 12 year olds in < >.

These are shown in Table 1.

The following profiles were described:

Year 7: A profile of a problem class with low cohesiveness and satisfaction and high friction - a group of individuals who do not easily gel. It was felt that the school and E.B.D. Team's investment in Circle Time, which had focused in particular on cooperation, had probably contributed to the 'average' value for competitiveness.

Year 6: A positive profile for the group regarded by staff as the model class.

Year 5: The Year 5 pupils showed a high level of competitiveness, although they still said that they were very satisfied in their class.

Year 4: An unusual profile was seen with high ratings for cohesion, competitiveness and satisfaction. This pattern is characteristic of a class with cliques and subgroups. There may be cohesion amongst children in a group, but with high levels of competition between the groups. The cohesion within the groups tends to maintain these established patterns.

Table 1. Pre-Intervention Class Profiles on the My Class Inventory.

| | Cohesiveness | Friction | Difficulty | Satisfaction | Competitiveness |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 34 Bucks Classes | Mean=9.4 (sd=1.08) | Mean=11.9 (sd=1.01) | Mean=8.1 (sd=0.61) | Mean=11.0 (sd=1.16) | Mean=10.2 (sd=0.61) |
| Year 4 | 11.2* | 11.4* | 7.3* | 12.9* | 12.3* |
| Year 5 | 9.7 | 10.5* | 7.2* | 12.4* | 13.2* |
| Year 6 | 10.3* | 9.9* | 7.9 | 12.4* | 10.4 |
| Year 7 | 8.2* | 12.4* | 6.4* | 9.1* | 10.3 |

Indicates a significant difference ($p < .05$) between the class mean and the mean scores obtained previously from 34 < > classes of pupils aged 8-12 years.

The low score on 'difficulty' for all classes except Class 6 was commented on. This was felt to be surprising when so many of the pupils do have difficulties. Staff felt that the pupils thought that the work was easy because they were careful to provide work which the children could do. It was also felt that a lot of pupils were satisfied with a low level of output and the issue of the children being in ability groups and therefore not seeing what other children were achieving was also voiced.

My Life in Schools Checklist results are shown in Table 2. These can be compared with Sharp's (1999) collation of scores for a range of schools originally reported in Arora & Thompson (1987) and Ahmad (1997). Arora & Thompson (1987) report an average bullying index of 9.24 (range 4.00-15.94) for 10 primary schools across England, while Ahmad (1997) reports an average bullying index of 10.25 for 5 middle schools in Sheffield. Table 2 indicates that the bullying index for the whole school was in the middle of this range, while Year 4 had a high index, Year 5 was around average and Years 6 and 7 had a

low rating. The level of bullying and aggression reported by Asian pupils, the only significant minority ethnic group in the school, was specifically examined and was found to be lower than that reported by other pupils. Boys and girls reported similar levels of bullying and aggression. Although the national comparison data indicate that the bullying index for Year 4 was particularly high, both the bullying and the aggression index show the commonly reported pattern of decline with age (Sharp, 1999).

Table 2. Pre-Intervention Class Profiles on the My Life in School Checklist.

| | Bullying Index | Aggression Index |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| Year 2 - 3 | - | - |
| Year 3 - 4 | - | - |
| Year 4 - 5 | 18.3 | 35.0 |
| Year 5 - 6 | 10.0 | 31.6 |
| Year 6 - 7 | 5.0 | 18.3 |
| Year 7 - 8 | 5.0 | 8.3 |
| Boys | 9.6 | 21.5 |
| Girls | 8.5 | 23.0 |
| Asian | 4.0 | 12.6 |
| Non-Asian | 9.6 | 23.3 |
| Whole school | 9.0 | 22.5 |

Phase 3: Intervention

The staff then held a separate staff meeting to consider the information presented and to focus their ideas on the issues which they wanted to take forward. Jacobs (1996) described a formula that recognises the importance of identifying both a vision and first steps to be taken in achieving successful change. The process of staff themselves prioritising areas for action and identifying what could be done was a key stage in the change process.

The following were highlighted to the E.P.S. Team:

- Build a positive sense of community.
- Maintain and strengthen the staff's sense of purpose and enthusiasm for teaching.

- Develop a common set of school values, which will promote a co-operative ethos.
- Establish a coherent approach to behaviour management.
- Teach, practice and encourage effective relationship management skills.

On the basis of these ideas, the E.P. team suggested introducing 'A Curriculum for Building Social Relationships' and prepared a programme of training in consultation with the staff which aimed to link theory with suggestions for practice and look at ideas for working on the school's ethos, particularly in relation to 'Changing the Ethos' in year 5 (present year 4). This was identified as the most pressing priority. In addition it was agreed that attention should be given to maintaining the positive ethos in year 6 (present year 5) and establishing a positive ethos in the newly transferred years 3 and 4.

Three twilight sessions were offered for all staff, by the E.P.s which covered the following areas.

- The co-operative curriculum
- Forming a group identity
- Trust-building
- Core skills for getting along with each other
 - active listening
 - co-operating
 - recognising and expressing feelings
 - being assertive
 - resolving conflicts

The link E.P. met regularly with the E.B.D. Team Teachers who worked on behaviour management with the staff. They were in school for two sessions each week and supported staff in developing Circle Time in years 4 and 7 which provided an important vehicle for implementing the strategies covered in the twilight sessions. The EBD Team teachers also provided INSET and worked with individual children and their teachers through target-setting, again, particularly in years 7 and 4. The staff had developed a new positive behaviour policy and the link E.P. had also worked with the lunchtime supervisors to make lunchtime a more positive time for pupils and staff alike. The County Advisor for S.E.N had also met with the Headteacher to look at practice in S.E.N. and a new

S.E.N. Governor had been appointed. Hence the Educational Psychology Service Involvement was but one of a coordinated series of pieces of work occurring in the school during this period.

Phase 4: Follow -up data collection

The follow-up data collection was carried out by school staff a year later and again each pupil was asked to complete the M.C.I. and the L.I.S.C. Questionnaires were sent to all staff which collected the rating scale information that had been collected through staff interviews prior to the intervention phase. Because of the changes in the age of transfer, only two classes were sampled twice – year 4 and year 5. Therefore it is only possible to compare the individual profiles of each of these two classes at the two points in time.

The results were fed back to staff and together the whole team reflected on the differences seen. As indicated above, it is difficult to separate out specific interventions. However, the results did indicate shifts in specific areas which the staff could identify. This then helped focus staff into evaluating the work that had been done, celebrating areas of success and identifying targets for further development. Returning to Lewin's model of change (op cit), positive reinforcement and acknowledgement of change is an essential element of 'refreezing'. Presenting tangible evidence that the measures taken by the staff had been effective was a concrete acknowledgement of their efforts.

Staff Questionnaires Table 3 reports staff ratings before the intervention phase and at follow-up. The non-parametric Wilcoxon Sign Ranked Test was used to assess the significance of the changes observed in median staff ratings. At follow-up the staff were significantly more positive in their responses to the question about how well children get along in the school as a whole.

Table 3. Change in Staff Ratings on a Scale from 1 to 10 of How Well Children Get Along with Each Other

| Question | Pre-intervention (April 1998) | | Follow-up (June 1999) | | Wilcoxon Test |
|---|----------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|---------------|
| | Median | Range | Median | Range | |
| How well the children in the school get along presently | 4.25 | 2.0 | 6.5 | 2.0 | Z=2.2, p<.05 |
| How well the children in your class get along presently | 5.0 | 5.5 | 6.75 | 2.0 | Z=0.91, p=.36 |

Staff mentioned 13 different aspects which they felt had helped. The following are a sample:

- Rules being upheld and reinforced – clearer procedures.
- Supportive new parents
- E.B.D. Team support
- Improvement in lunchtimes – less confrontation
- Extra training

The My Class Inventory Table 4 shows the class profiles on the My Class Inventory after the intervention phase. It must be remembered that because of area-wide changes in the ages of admission and transfer, all the pupils who were in years 5 and 6 transferred to secondary schools before the follow-up was carried out. The pupils who were in Years 3 and 4 when the follow-up was carried out had all been new to the school the previous September. Table 5 compares the pre-intervention and follow up scores of the two classes that were in the school on both occasions, Year 4 (1998)/Year 5 (1999) and Year 5 (1998)/Year 6 (1999). A highly significant decrease between Year 4 and Year 5 was apparent in the perceptions of pupils in this year group of the amount of friction in their class. Non-significant trends were apparent in the reduction of cohesiveness to a level more typical in classes of pupils of this age and in a lowering of competitiveness and increase in satisfaction. Fewer changes were apparent between years 5 and 6. A significant reduction in perceived cohesiveness and a trend towards increased friction in the class are perhaps

worth investigating further, particularly in view of the highly stable perceptions on the other dimensions sampled.

Table 4. Follow-up Class Profiles on the My Class Inventory.

| | Cohesiveness | Friction | Difficulty | Satisfaction | Competitiveness |
|--------|--------------|----------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Year 3 | 9.8 | 11.6 | 8.3 | 10.3 | 11.8 |
| Year 4 | 9.4 | 10.0 | 8.5 | 12.4 | 12.6 |
| Year 5 | 9.7 | 9.2 | 7.6 | 13.9 | 11.0 |
| Year 6 | 7.9 | 11.1 | 7.1 | 12.6 | 13.4 |

Table 5. Changes in Year 4 and Year 5 Class Profiles on the My Class Inventory

| | | Cohesiveness | Friction | Difficulty | Satisfaction | Competitiveness |
|------------|--------|--------------|----------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| '98 Year 4 | Pre | 11.2 | 11.4 | 7.3 | 12.9 | 12.3 |
| '99 Year 5 | Post | 9.7 | 9.2 | 7.6 | 13.9 | 11.0 |
| | t-test | 1.67 | 2.80** | 0.38 | 1.90 | 1.67 |
| '98 Year 5 | Pre | 9.7 | 10.5 | 7.2 | 12.4 | 13.2 |
| '99 Year 6 | Post | 7.9 | 11.1 | 7.1 | 12.6 | 13.4 |
| | t-test | 2.32* | 1.24 | 0.05 | 0.34 | 0.26 |

*p<.05, **p<.01

The Life in Schools Checklist Table 6 shows the changes over time in the class profiles for years 4/5 and 5/6 on the My Life in Schools Checklist. The dramatic improvement in the year 4 - 5 group was not seen in the Year 5 - 6 group (see below) and the incoming year 3's and 4's had brought their own difficulties. Indeed, at follow-up the year 3 class was causing more concern than the year 5 class.

Table 6. Changes in Class Profiles on the My Life in Schools Checklist.

| | Pre-intervention (April 1998) | | Follow-up (December 1999) | | t-tests | |
|------------|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|----------|------------|
| | Bullying Index | Aggression Index | Bullying Index | Aggression Index | Bullying | Aggression |
| Year 2 - 3 | - | - | 34.2 | 51.5 | - | - |
| Year 3 - 4 | - | - | 17.3 | 40.3 | - | - |
| Year 4 - 5 | 18.3 | 35.0 | 4.7 | 17.3 | 3.26** | 3.30** |
| Year 5 - 6 | 10.0 | 31.6 | 14.2 | 30.8 | 0.75 | 0.18 |
| Year 6 - 7 | 5.0 | 18.3 | - | - | - | - |
| Year 7 - 8 | 5.0 | 8.3 | - | - | - | - |

*p<.05, **p<.01

Evaluation

The Year 4 group had been identified prior to the initial data collection as a class causing significant concern and the 'My Class Inventory' and 'Life in Schools Checklist' completed in April 1998 confirmed these concerns:

- An unusual profile on the 'My Class Inventory' - with high ratings for both cohesion, and competitiveness. This profile was suggested to be characteristic of a class with cliques and subgroups where there may be cohesion amongst children in a group, but with high levels of competition between the groups leading to a degree of tension and, possibly, to bullying.
- On the 'Life in Schools Checklist', the class was found to have a very high Bullying score. Their score was outside the upper limit of the range reported by Arora and Thompson (1987).
- The staff interviews had identified the class as causing significant concern.

However, in December 1999, the class showed a completely different and more positive profile. The levels of Friction, Bullying and Aggression reported by the class had all decreased significantly and positive trends were apparent on other dimensions of classroom ethos sampled by the My Class Inventory. Over the same period the year 5 group however, showed minimal differences in their Bullying and Aggression indices and few changes in their profile on the 'My Class Inventory'.

During this time, the Year 4 class had been a particular focus for the intervention efforts supported by EBD Team and the Educational Psychology Service, as

described in the section on Phase 3. However a number of other factors that may have affected the group dynamics should also be considered:

- Transfer of two children with significant SEN to other schools (one moving out of the area). Transfer of new pupils into the group.
- A different classteacher and hence a 'fresh start' in a new classroom environment on the 'grown – up' side of the school building, with new rules and sanctions and rewards.

Nonetheless, the results for the particular group causing concern would seem to indicate that the changes which the school implemented did support a substantial improvement. The follow-up data presented to the staff at a evaluation meeting provoked discussion about supporting the difficult Year 3 group and the possibility of following the group over a further length of time has been discussed to help staff in 'plotting' progress.

Evaluation of broader outcomes also present a positive picture. These have included:

- Discussions between the link E.P. and other L.E.A. staff about reports from the HMI Inspector which describe a marked improvement in the standards of behaviour and the management of the behaviour. Assemblies in particular have been praised as "important times of coming together" and Circle Time was also specifically mentioned as a time for sharing concerns (April 1999).
- The link E.P. describes a difference in visiting the school and observing in classrooms. The children raised at planning meetings as causing concern are no longer raised primarily for behaviour. There is now a spread of need representing a whole range of concerns. Behaviour is managed within the classrooms and on the playground without a string of children outside the Headteacher's room and the office. Children are overheard talking about the number of stickers which they have been awarded, who is the "champion of the week" and who is the latest "Superfriend" on the board in the hall.

In evaluating the work of the E.P.S. it is difficult, as mentioned above, to separate the effects of specific interventions. Staff commitment and enthusiasm in the training sessions were excellent and there was evidence that teachers

built on and developed many of the ideas in their own classroom practice, particularly where circle time was regularly used. Indeed one significant implication of this work is the importance of close liaison between the various services that are invariably involved and of careful planning with the school to maximise the coherence and effectiveness of the support and assistance provided. Turning to examine in more detail the specific contribution and role of the educational psychologist, a number of areas can be identified. E.P.s are able to offer skills in systems analysis, identifying areas for schools where improvements can be made as well as presenting INSET, drawing on the knowledge gained of the school as well as a unique psychological perspective, in this case around building social relationships and changing the ethos of the school. The other unique contribution of the EPS in this piece of work was the application of research skills used in the evaluation of effectiveness of the strategies implemented.

Implications for E.P. practice

Working with a school in Special Measures as a link Educational Psychologist is certainly a challenge. The requirement for working in a planned manner and linking in with the other L.E.A. support services requires additional time and a great deal of thought. The cross-service working is without doubt, valuable, although again it brings challenges, as differences need to be acknowledged and brought together. It is crucial however that additional Educational Psychologist time is built into the Local Education Authority's Action Plan so that the level and direction of support which the school receives can be monitored. It is also important to work closely with the Advisory Service who have a key role in supporting schools at this time. Educational Psychology Services themselves can plan ahead for this - estimating the number of schools that are likely to be in special measures/serious weaknesses at any one time and planning accordingly. Our experiences would lead us to recommend allowing 2 or 3 EPs to have around 5 or 6 days to work with each school in special measures. This time would include time for planning, preparation and follow-up. Links with local Educational Psychology Training courses are invaluable for contributing to this kind of work.

An Ofsted inspection creates a great deal of stress for schools. Staff work hard in planning and preparing for an inspection and then throughout the inspection, they are likely to experience stressful levels of anxiety. If the school is then

judged to be in Special Measures, it will be in receipt of a difficult and uncomfortable judgement. This may be taken by some members of staff as a direct reflection of their individual skills and capabilities. The fact that the school then remains under the “spotlight” for an additional 24 months, with repeated visits by the Inspector as well as observations and inputs from other attached professionals adds up to a recipe for possible staff breakdown – for the team, as well as for individuals.

Educational Psychologists can play a valuable role as an attached and familiar critical friend, without an inspectorial role. In this case, the initial reaction by the school in requesting additional time to “solve” the problem of “the 20% of difficult individual children” by assessing them was discussed and examined with staff and the need for more creative work identified. This allowed the Educational Psychologists, in particular the link E.P., to get to know the staff well, to listen to the difficulties and to reflect some of the issues back to the staff who were then able to jointly direct the input which they felt would be most beneficial. Already knowing all of the staff in such a small school was also beneficial in working with them. The particular management style of the Headteacher was a great support, as staff all appeared able to talk freely and openly. The combination of the link E.P. who was very familiar with the environment of the school and colleagues who were less involved, was valuable, especially in staff training where a balance was achievable between ‘making it real for the school’ yet retaining the ‘external’ focus.

Through our training in action research, change enablement and project management, Educational Psychologists can offer schools a means of evaluating progress made which can also be supportive to schools who are feeling generally under-valued and criticised. Through the combination of the psychological knowledge base around change and the interpersonal and technical skills to facilitate change at the organisational, group and individual levels, psychologists are well placed to undertake this type of work and to do it well. Given the Government emphasis on ‘intervention in inverse proportions to success’ and the current re-evaluation of the role of psychologists by the DFEE working party, this is an important area of work to both focus on and publicise.

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Please note: Susan Bettle was married in 2001 and became Susan Birch

APPENDIX 3

Working with schools in difficulties EPS – October 2000

The aim of this questionnaire was to look at how we have been involved in supporting schools in difficulties and how we can be better involved in the support and monitoring provided by the LEA.

The information gained is from EPs who have worked with schools, who after Ofsted have received support from the LEA through having been placed in:

Serious weakness
Special measures
Other reasons

Schools: 9

Approximate dates of Ofsted: from Spring 1997 – October 2000

1. Information provided to EPs

Were you aware of when the Inspection was due? (e.g. through the school improvement team meetings?)

Yes: 7

Source of information:

School: 7
ASIT:
Adviser:
Other

No: 2

Were you consulted about concerns about the school before the Inspection?

Yes: 2

No: 6

If so, who by?

- Headteacher - 2
- ASIT were aware of ongoing concerns
- Advisory team completed audit before the inspection, no concerns except SCD Dept which was then highly commended by Ofsted....

Did you receive a copy of the school's Ofsted report ? / Summary of the report / school's Action Plan? / LEA's Action Plan? (please delete)

Ofsted report: 1
Summary: 6
School's Action Plan: 1
LEA Ofsted Plan:

No: 2

If so, who from:

EPS: 1
School: 1
Adviser:
SAO: 1
Don't know: 2

2. Liaison

Did you have contact with:

☐ the SAO

Yes: 4 (1 – focus group in school)
No: 5

☐ the Link Adviser for the school

Yes: 3
No: 6

☐ Any other advisors

Yes: 1 (SEN)
No: 8

If so, what was the purpose of this contact?

- ☐ Information sharing - 2
- ☐ Information seeking - 2
- ☐ Information giving - 1
- ☐ Planning support - 3

Other comments:

- Both involvement's were HIPs – no direct interface from EPS to LEA improvement team
- The multi-professional (Focus group?) meeting arose because at one time the school were due to exclude 12 pupils. The group included SAO, AO, SEN consultant, EBD and PRU support teachers, SEN AEO, EWO, EP, HT and SENCO
- Focus group pulled together after Special Measures to plan support for SEN and behaviour.

3. Involvement with writing school / LEA Action Plan

Were the EPS mentioned in the

☐ School Action plan?

Yes: 1

No:

Don't know: 7 (1 – HIP had been proposed)

☐ LEA Action Plan?

Yes: 1

No:

Don't know: 8

Were you consulted about this?

☐ School

Yes:

No: 6

☐ LEA

Yes:

No: 6

What role did you play in the school:

☐ **Before the Inspection**

- Attached EP work linking with SENCO and pastoral deputy – mainly individual pupils.
- Attached EP work – although inspection was after only one month of attachment to the school.
- Staff training for 'whole class' methods – especially for behaviour management.
- Normal visits to see children. Constant reminders to school to follow SEN procedures properly.
- Was not attached EP
- Was involved in boosting self esteem of Department Head, helping plan individual profiles, as concerns had been raised about the Dept.

☐ **During**

- On hand at the end of the telephone

☐ **After**

- Emotional support and then planned project work with Chief EP and HT. After wards part of SEN focus group for the school and working closely with SEN Adviser and EBD Team
- Emotional support – there were lots of emotional issues including resignation of the Acting Headteacher
- Consultation with EBD Peri team and Chilbec. Shared concerns that school reluctant to take up offers of support for behaviour policy.
- HIP

4. LEA Support for the School

How effective did YOU think the LEA's support for the school was?

- The school got through the Inspection without going into Special Measures, therefore adequate.
- Don't know what has been offered.
- Ineffective in total; the LEA's role is a difficult one, but was not well handled. Goals are unstated and remain unclear (close the school versus REVIVE and SUPPORT the school). Role of EPS partners was also less than coherent.
- Not very. No-one seemed to have the power to MAKE the school follow procedures, they were only able to advise.
- In long term, the support was effective. Support went in quickly as it was the first school entering special measures and therefore support was still arranged on an area basis.
- Mixed – in some areas effective, short term anyway. In other areas less visibly effective. School now out of SM.

Did you have ideas about improvements at this time? If so, what were they?

- The authority probably need to ensure that set targets are met. A careful balance needs to be kept between 'support' and ensuring targets are met by the school.
- Establish clear goals, communicate these honestly and engage all parties in collaboration. "Joined –up" working is an inter-agency issue!
- School's planning process so that changes can be put into place in advance not post hoc.
- School had asked for help prior to improvement and we had noted concerns – no practical / financial support was given. After Ofsted, money and resources seemed unlimited.
- More true joint working required, felling that we were doing things to support the school, but no-one else was.

What improvements would you like to see?

- As stated: a coherent strategy, which can respond in a timely way and with some flexibility, in the interests of pupils. The biggest issue is that Ofsted criticism and LEA support together lead to disintegration of the school (staff leave, Headteacher is "sacrificed" supply cover is unobtainable, incompetent...etc.)
- Shift to a trigger system before the event.
- A greater link between different parts of the authority, e.g. several children were put forward for MPA and 'refused' – they were probably legitimate cases, but had poor paper work attached and maybe the emphasis was wrong, e.g. they'd been put forward for learning rather than EBD. It may have been more helpful, given the vulnerability of the school, for FAP to ask for more info and then allow the MPAs to proceed. This may have helped the school as several of the children were in the same class.

- True joint planning and joint delivery of support. Working preventatively with schools before Ofsted are due. Management of the change process for schools.
- Help BEFORE not afterwards. Support NOT criticism.

5. EPS support for the School

What support did the EPS offer the school?

- Training staff
- HIP was discussed
- Fact that school entered into Special Measures was not accounted for in time allocation.
- EP has had to pro-rata all schools in order to deliver, therefore lack of time.
- HIP – data gathering, INSET with whole staff, data gathering and feedback.
- Attached EP and HIP
- None specifically for Ofsted. HIP was planned, but has not gone ahead due to staffing.
- Afterwards, we provided a behaviour audit.

How effective do you think this was?

- Limited
- Valued – used in the inspection.
- Very valuable – part of SEN team supporting.
- Not effective
- Very effective – school was able to show Ofsted that they had taken on board all suggestions from that document. Also, school continues to use the strategies.
- HIP could not be delivered as lack of staff.

How best do you think we can support schools in difficulties?

Now?

- Clear policy and protocol for reporting concerns agreed and shared with Headteachers.
- I doubt that this is realistically possible on current staffing levels.
- Via link EP being supportive
- Allocate time to check Special Needs paperwork.
- We can't – not enough people at the coal face. If we divert all of our resources to one area, then another school will fail.
- Setting up of clear procedures – review of HIP procedures ready for next year. Feeding in to ASITs and sharing info more effectively.

Next year, when we are fully staffed?

- HIPs are not an efficient way of supporting schools in crisis: the time allocation is too limited and inflexible (no short-term 'clustering' of time is generally possible for HIP team members because of other diary pressures.)

- Time to audit / design interventions with staff. Be involved in designing and planning systems before there's trouble. Difficult to get to this stage. When achieved it's by long attachment to the school and helping with policies and strategies. Could we have training or go to joint training on planning with heads or deputy Heads.
- Behaviour Audit / Pebble Brook type approach PRIOR to Ofsted
- We must have a needs-lead service, we must ensure equity of provision and we must be able to respond rapidly. We need realistic patch sizes. Fully staffed means more than another 3 fulltime maingrade EPs.
- Target project work – behaviour / systems audit. Offer INSET, tailor-made for the school.
- We need a flexible time allocation system so that EPs can work jointly and creatively with the school to meet their needs, before inspections are due.

6. Any other comments?

- LEA support needs defining and organising – if we are going to be part of a response by the LEA.
- I think it should be clear what our terms of reference are: then we need a time allocation model – 2 suggestions – (a) E.g. of critical incident mode, re-prioritisation where other schools' work is cancelled without replacement; or (b) We use a 'reserved time' approach (minimum 1 session per week) to preserve enough flexibility to respond to 'here and now' problems. If we can't achieve this, I think it's better for us to state clearly that we cannot play a role in this LEA function.
- We still have very little contact with Advisers.
- I tried to alert LEA of difficulties / concerns in the school. Staff changes and no clear protocols caused considerable difficulties for me.

Susan Bettle
Senior Educational Psychologist

APPENDIX 4

Draft Educational Psychology Service Guidelines

Supporting Schools Causing Concern

Background

The identification and support for schools causing concern are two of the main roles of Local Education Authorities as outlined in the new code of practice for LEA relations with schools and also in the Guidance for the next round of Education Development Plans (2002-2007). Within the Local Education Authority, the School Support Team have the lead and the key role to play in supporting school improvement and in supporting schools causing concern. However, to support this function effectively, the team needs to work closely and effectively with other professionals within 'Education' who are supporting schools.

The School Support Team in < >

Currently the School Support Team is organised with a Head of Service for School Improvement, with three Area Senior Advisory Officers and their supporting Education Officers and with the Advisory Service, lead by a Chief Adviser, Deputy Chief Adviser and three Senior Advisors (who line manage a team of Advisers as well as holding specialist functions). Please see Appendix 1.

The Advisory service offer regular visits to schools, undertaking a planned programme of work known as the Annual Cycle. The main focuses of the Annual Cycle are schools results in exams and tests, issues related to the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of leadership and management (including school improvement and financial planning). Judgements are reached as to the strengths and weaknesses of each school – this process is described as supported school self-evaluation and is underpinned by a county framework and other information, for example PANDA reports (see Senior EP (School improvement for further information). The culmination of the cycle is the 'Annual Dialogue' involving the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the attached Adviser. At this meeting a summative review of the school is agreed by all parties and the school is placed in a category of effectiveness (see Appendix 2).

The LEA is then involved in offering planned support towards targeted schools as placed in categories 3,4 and 5. This work is co-ordinated by the attached adviser or by other project managers as agreed.

The Role of the LEA in Ofsted Inspections

Where Ofsted identify a school as causing concern, the school may be placed in one of three categories: underachieving, serious weaknesses or special measures.

After a school has been inspected, the school has 40 days in which to write an Action Plan. The LEA is involved in verbal feedback to the school, immediately after the inspection, and is also involved in the meeting with the Governors to discuss the contents of the report.

If the school has been placed in special measures, the LEA has a duty to prepare a statement of action within 50 days as well as a commentary on the school's action plan outlining whether the LEA feels that the school can deliver on the action plan with the support agreed. The school will be subject to termly monitoring visits by HMI with an Ofsted judgement at the end of two years.

Where the school is placed in serious weaknesses, the LEA must prepare a statement of action, but not a commentary. The school may be subject to monitoring and will have a standard Ofsted inspection after two years to decide whether the school has made adequate progress, should remain in serious weaknesses (rare) or should be placed in special measures.

Schools identified as underachieving are unlikely to be monitored but will have a follow-up inspection.

The LEA will visit the school for termly monitoring meetings to review the deployment of the plan.

The LEA also plays a role in entering schools experiencing difficulties between Inspections and these are the schools identified and supported through the categories (see Appendix 2).

The role of Educational Psychologists

Within the LEA, we have a role to play as independent chartered psychologists, working to support school improvement and working to raise achievement for all children in our schools. Where a school is causing concern in terms of the education it is providing for the children within it, we have a duty to discuss these with the school and to pass these concerns to the School Support Team.

We need to be clear that we are operating within rules of confidentiality and that our communication is open and clear at all times. We will therefore always discuss concerns with the school and with the headteacher specifically before passing these concerns on to the appropriate person (attached Adviser or SAO). There will obviously be occasions when this will be challenging, in terms of discussing concerns with the school, but if we can operate within a clear and open system, we have the professional skills to be able to offer this challenge as well as support. Where an individual EP is experiencing particular difficulty, they may want or need to seek support through the Senior EP (School Improvement) or through their line manager.

There are five threads to our involvement in school improvement:

1. Communication and information sharing about schools
 - a) School Improvement Team Meetings, held monthly in each area, chaired by the SAO and involving the attached Advisers for those schools, a representative from the EPS (currently Senior EP School Improvement), a representative from PSF and the EWS, and variably, representatives from the PRUs. There is a separate round of meetings for the secondary sector. The aim is to share information about schools, inspections, amalgamations and news from each service, across the teams.

- b) Communication with individual attached Advisers as part of the network of professionals working with schools.
 - c) Sharing of memos/ EP consultation forms and adviser contact forms about particular school visits.
- 2. Supporting and enabling schools and other colleagues
 - a) Involvement in multi-agency review meetings about particular schools
 - b) EP project work
 - c) Ongoing link EP work with particular schools, e.g. work focused on individual pupils or classes, INSET work.
- 3. Evaluating outcomes of interventions and the targeting of support
 - a) Evaluating the project work which we offer to schools causing concern.
 - b) Evaluating the usage of the additional time targeted towards schools causing concern.
 - c) Supporting LEA evaluation of interventions.
- 4. Involvement around Ofsted Inspections
 - a) Supporting individual schools and the delivery of their action plans.
 - b) Responding to Ofsted reports about particular schools.
 - d) Providing information about input to schools in special measures for LEA Action Plans.
- 5. Involvement in and contribution to EDP priorities and county policy development, e.g. the behaviour support plan, Inclusion etc.

Supporting Schools

From September 2001, the EPS has allocated additional visits to support schools causing concern, i.e. those in categories 3,4 and 5 and these visits have been added to those already allocated to schools on the basis of the agreed formula.

| Primary schools | | Secondary Schools | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Category | Additional visits | Category | Additional visits |
| 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| 5 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

This additional time can be used by the EP for attendance at school review meetings, for developmental work with the school (e.g. INSET or work around specific whole school issues) and for work with groups or individual children. The school review meetings are held on a planned basis for schools in categories 3,4 and 5. EPs may be invited to attend by the SAO or attached adviser chairing the meetings. This may occur where an EP is actively involved in supporting the school as part of the planned support.

The EP and school can also use the usual school's time allocation for development work as well as being able to bid for project work time from the

time allocated by the service for project work. Each full time EP has one session a week allocated for project work.

Supporting schools through inspection:

Below is a list of possible types of support which we can offer schools going through Inspection. Some of these may obviously be relevant to schools who are causing concern but are not yet aware of an inspection.

Pre-Ofsted

Preparing for Inspection with a particular focus on Special Educational Needs and Inclusion, e.g. how can classteachers provide info for Inspectors about pupils with emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, supporting a school in reviewing their SEN systems (perhaps with the SEN Adviser).

Support for staff in meeting the challenge of inspection –supporting the school in putting in place strategies to boost the confidence of the staff, prepare for stressful situations, maintain control, manage the inspectors.

Input and supporting the schools preparation on specific issues, for example, the very able, the 'underachievement' of boys, Diversity etc.

During Ofsted

Being available to support staff

Post-Ofsted

Support for staff, who are likely to feel exhausted, deflated and may feel in shock, bereaved and as though they have been subject to a critical incident.

Specific pieces of project work, for example, offering a role as a facilitator or process consultant in working with the school to support their development, using Soft Systems Methodology or using a traditional action research approach. Where it would be appropriate to work with other teams, for example, METAS, Behaviour Support Team, the literacy or numeracy consultants, we would welcome this.

Examples of areas:

- Reviews of strategies put into place (e.g. behaviour policies and whole school behaviour management),
- Work looking at ethos and culture within the school,
- Work looking at the self-esteem of staff and pupils,
- Improving relationships with parents,
- Enhancing the involvement of pupils in the decision-making in the school
- Approaches to literacy and numeracy

- Inclusion
- Achievement of Bilingual pupils

Where more traditional INSET is offered, we will aim to ensure that follow-up strategies are in place, e.g. peer mentoring, so that the INSET has a more long-term effect on the school and will effect changes to practice.

Please note – the Appendices to these guidelines have been removed.

Child Maltreatment, Physical Abuse and School Performance – the Contribution of Educational Psychologists

1. Introduction

In March 2000, 36540 children's names were on the child protection register in the United Kingdom (NSPCC website, 13th October 2002). It is worthy of note that this figure is likely to be an underestimate of the number of children requiring protection as it only includes children where the services have become aware of the maltreatment which they are suffering. Of these 36540 children, there were more boys known to social services than girls (17349 compared to 16625) and the largest number of children were between the ages of 1 and 4 years of age. The NSPCC website describes how the number of children's names added to the child protection registers has been steadily increasing since 1988 when national statistics were first collated.

Through government legislation, schools now have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and teachers could face disciplinary action if they fail to identify signs of abuse or fail to act to protect the child (NSPCC website, October 2002). This is despite most teachers only receiving a minimal amount of training on child protection whilst being professionally trained (Baginsky, 2002). There are therefore implications for schools as well as Educational Psychologists around child protection and these need to be considered. These include being clear about what research has to say, and about respective roles and responsibilities.

This assignment will consider the research evidence available in the area of child maltreatment and the effect that experiences of abuse have on school performance. The assignment will then focus on the result of physical abuse on school performance. Implications for schools and for Educational Psychologists will be discussed.

2. Context and Practice

The Children's Act (1989) lays down the duty of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need and one dimension of that is finding out, with the family, whether the child is in need and how the child and their family might best be helped. A key part of the Government's initiative to improve the life chances of disadvantaged children is the development of the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families (DOH, 2000) – "to ensure a timely response and the effective provision of services" (p. vii).

Education, alongside health and youth justice services are identified as a service who are likely to have involvement with children and their families before social services are involved – the importance of the contribution of these services to any assessment and sometimes to the provision of services to the family, is highlighted. The importance of early intervention in preventing crisis and abuse within families and the need for effective joint working to ensure early intervention is also emphasised in the Assessment Framework.

Currently Local Authorities are also required to have Child Protection Guidance which assists designated teachers, Headteachers, other school staff and Governors in carrying out their duties with respect to child protection. These duties include the referral of any disclosure or suspected abuse to Social Services. The Children's Act (1989) defines abuse as being present when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer 'significant harm' – ill treatment or the impairment of health or development. Child Protection Registers use 4 categories of abuse – neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

Baginsky (2000) found that 98% of sampled local authorities provided guidance about child abuse to schools, although only 56% provide a specific document for Education. Out of 327 schools surveyed, 326 had a designated teacher for child protection, 94% having a child protection policy in place and 99% with established procedures. However, Baginsky (2002) draws attention to the uncertainty felt by many schools and teachers about work in this area. Baginsky (2000) sampled schools and found that:

- 88% of schools felt that not all teachers would be able to recognise signs of abuse in children.
- Two thirds of the schools reported uncertainty about when to contact social services.
- 84% of the schools expressed concern about the way the different agencies involved communicated with each other.
- 82% of the schools were concerned about supporting teachers in teaching children who had experienced abuse.
- 92% of schools identified the maintenance of relationships with parents as problematic.
- Most schools sampled felt that they required additional counselling and support in working with child protection cases.

In summary, although policy and procedure may be in place in local authorities and schools, there still appears to be a high degree of uncertainty and lack of confidence in the carrying out of these procedures with some of our most vulnerable pupils.

Education Development Plans require Education Services to set targets and to engage in activities to 'narrow the attainment gap', focusing on the underachievement of vulnerable pupils within school improvement (DfES, 2001). These children will include those presenting in schools with Special Educational Needs, children in public care, refugees and asylum seekers, children from travelling families and children from ethnic minorities. Children who are maltreated may present in school with specific special educational needs, including social and emotional difficulties and academic underachievement. Schools serving a disadvantaged area may find that a large number of their children are presenting with such difficulties and the relationship between social disadvantage, poverty, child maltreatment and special educational needs may need to be explored in order to best support these pupils, their families and the schools within which they are taught. Hence schools may increasingly need to increase their effectiveness in supporting these children, not just for the protection of the children, their families and the school staff themselves, but also to answer the questions of Ofsted and Local Education Authorities. Schools and educators will need to be clear about the

effects of maltreatment and to be clear about the support they offer the pupils as well as their role within child protection procedures.

3. Psychological Theory and Research

3.1 Reviewing the Research Evidence

The research evidence reporting the negative impact of child maltreatment is extensive and complex. This complexity results in part from the difficulties in defining child maltreatment and the different methodologies, sampling techniques and depth of statistical analysis used. Despite a general agreement about the consequences of abuse, early research provided little or no detail about the processes through which negative impacts occur.

Dodge, Bates, Pettit and Valente (1995) describe how the earliest studies tended to be retrospective, with small samples and inadequate control groups. Identifying control groups is particularly problematic in research about child maltreatment because of the difficulty in guaranteeing that children within the control group have not been and are not being maltreated. Studies often rely on child and parental reports of home circumstances and hence children in the control group may be being maltreated without the researchers being aware.

The lack of agreed criteria for definition contributed to the difficulties in analysing data, comparing studies and in measuring effects. The majority of the research used agency-determined cases and evidence from child protection services as the indicator for the presence of abuse. However, Dodge et al (1995) raise the difficulties of using this criterion, suggesting that this may lead to a bias within the sampling of maltreated children as perhaps only children with the most severe acting out behaviour become known to child protection services. There could be a confound between the effect of the maltreatment and the effect of the involvement of legal and social services or other institutional involvement in the child's life. The presence of other causal factors, for example poverty and unemployment were not always controlled for in these earlier studies giving rise to the possibility that a third variable was producing any effects seen. Lastly, many of the early studies did not

take into account the fact that many maltreated children are subject to more than one type of abuse (Manly, Kim, Rogosch & Cicchetti, 2001). Effects were therefore assigned to a particular form of abuse, where perhaps other forms of abuse were occurring.

In reviewing the research, Manly et al (2001) highlight the need for studies to emphasise the processes within maltreatment and the resulting variety of outcomes, rather than simply listing the deficits or negative outcomes associated with maltreatment in its different forms. Manly et al (2001) suggest that because of the variability of maltreatment incidents, the different ways that children process these different events and the developmental impact that they will have on individual children, then there will be a range of outcomes for maltreated children. Manly et al (2001) suggest using an approach from the developmental psychopathology research as a framework for viewing maltreatment. Here maltreatment is understood through an awareness of the interplay between the characteristics of the child, the family and the environment as risk and protective factors which interact over time (Cicchetti & Rizley, 1981). The approach emphasises development as “a set of relations among and within social, biological and psychological systems that are reorganised as development proceeds” (Manly et al, 2001, p. 760). The child is exposed to new experiences which are integrated differently depending upon the complexity of the child's capabilities and the individual differences in their perceptions and responses to stimuli (Cicchetti & Tucker, 1994). Within this context, studies which focus on the dichotomy of maltreatment occurring or not occurring appear simplistic. Manly et al (2001) discuss the need to report on a number of dimensions including subtype of maltreatment, severity, timing, frequency, onset, chronicity, developmental periods and the identity of the perpetrator or perpetrators.

Barnett, Manly and Cicchetti (1993) developed a multi-dimensional system for categorising and describing children's experiences of maltreatment – the Maltreatment Classification System. This provides operational definitions of maltreatment with inclusion and exclusion criteria and examples of each of five levels of severity for each subtype. It gives measures of the onset, frequency and chronicity of each subtype, the developmental period within which each subtype

occurred, the perpetrator of each subtype and the relations amongst these dimensions.

3.2. Incidences of Subtypes of Maltreatment

Manly et al (2001) used the MCS (Barnett et al, 1993) on a sample of 492 maltreated children on a summer day camp. The children were identified through Child Protective and Preventive Services records. They found that physical neglect was the most common form of maltreatment (79% of maltreated children). Of the maltreated children, 64% had experienced multiple subtypes of abuse – 34% experienced two, 23% experienced three and 6% experienced all four subtypes. Only 8% of the children experienced physical abuse alone. Claussen and Crittenden (1991) found that 89% of a sample of physically abused children had also experienced psychological or emotional maltreatment. Please see the APPENDIX for definitions of the subtypes of abuse.

In England in 2000, the percentages of children registered under the different categories on the child protection register were as follows:

- 35% for neglect
- 23% for physical abuse
- 16% for emotional abuse
- 12% sexual abuse
- 12% for multiple types of abuse
- 2% for other

[Children and young people on child protection registers – England,
as cited on the NSPCC website]

These statistics obviously give a different picture, being based on children registered by social services in England rather than gathering information about at risk families in the USA through research.

3.3. The Effects of Maltreatment

This assignment will pull together some general research before focussing on the more recent studies and then more specifically, on the effects of physical abuse.

Malinosky-Rummell and Hansen (1993) describe how the prevalence of child abuse and its consequences have been increasingly recognised since Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegmueller and Silver (1962) described the symptoms of the “battered child”. They describe how much of the research focussing on the consequences of abuse have focused on the short-term effects on childhood behaviour, including negative social behaviour, increased aggression with adults and peers and internalising problems such as low self-worth. Other effects which they summarise include greater perceptual-motor deficits, lower scores on measures of general intellectual functioning and academic achievement.

Eckenrode, Laird and Doris (1993) studied the school and social services records of 420 maltreated children from kindergarten through to year 12, matched with comparison children. They found that maltreated children performed significantly below their peers in standardised test and grades and were more likely to repeat a year. The maltreated children had more discipline referrals and suspensions. This study began to look at the differences between children experiencing different subtypes of maltreatment and found that neglected children had the poorest academic outcomes and the physically abused children had the most discipline problems. However, this study did use agency-identified samples and hence the confounds discussed above could have been present, for example, that these children were known to the agency exactly because they had more difficult behaviour and that was why the agencies had become involved.

Leiter and Johnsen (1994) begin to look at the processes underlying abuse rather than cataloguing the deficits which abused children suffer. They describe how abuse and neglect impact specifically on school performance through poor attendance, poor concentration, hunger, fatigue, low self-esteem, low aspirations, social isolation, stigmatism and a fear and distrust of adults. However, they highlight the ambiguous nature of these reported findings and that when comparing across

studies, no findings are universal. This may be because of the differences in definitions used as discussed earlier. Leiter and Johnson (1994) suggest that physically abused children exhibit more aggressive behaviour through their early experience of acceptable violent behaviours which, in the classroom, disrupt teaching and learning and lead to lower academic achievement. They suggest that neglected children have learning deficits due to their lack of stimulating environments and language. They suggest that psychologically unavailable mothers lead to interactional difficulties for the children (Egeland et al, 1983). Sexually abused children show low self-esteem, diminished self-efficacy, problems in managing anger and a mistrust of adults. They suggest that the 'need to keep secrets' leads to either school drop-out whereby young people will not need to answer 'difficult' questions or immersion in school as a 'safe haven'.

The studies cited above rely on the definitions of maltreatment assigned by the child protective services and hence the difficulties highlighted in the first section may be influencing the data. Despite these problems, the studies certainly do suggest that the maltreated children are having more difficulties than their non-maltreated peers in their schooling.

Research utilising the perspective of developmental psychopathology and specifically that using classification instruments such as the Maltreatment Classification System (Barnett et al, 1993) provides much clearer and more specific evidence for the effects of child maltreatment on child development and begins to suggest process pathways through looking at the interactions of the different types of abuse and the stages of childhood in which they are experienced.

Manly, Cicchetti and Barnett (1994) supported the use of multiple dimensions of maltreatment for predicting adaptation throughout child development. The use of the MCS emphasised the interaction between the dimensions of the severity of the maltreatment and the frequency of incidences of maltreatment. They found that low severity maltreatment which occurred frequently was related to maladaptive outcomes. Maltreatment which had occurred over a long period of time was predictive of peer perceptions of aggressive behaviour.

Smith and Thornberry (1995) used the MCS with a sample of 1000 adolescents. They found that a history of maltreatment increased the risk for delinquent behaviour. Extensive maltreatment, with increased frequency, severity, duration and incidence of subtypes was associated with higher rates of delinquency.

Bolger and Patterson (2001), using the MCS found that chronicity is a robust dimension in predicting peer rejection and aggression. The timing of the maltreatment was important in determining the impact of the maltreatment on the children's self-perceptions and relationships with peers. Early onset of maltreatment lead to impairments in the child's self-concept (Bolger et al, 1998). They found that emotional maltreatment early on lead to children being less likely to have a close reciprocated relationship with a peer. Physical abuse was associated with low self-esteem and peer relationship difficulties with more frequent and chronic abuse being linked with more negative outcomes. Neglected children had fewer reciprocated friendships and sexually abused children had lower self-esteem.

Manly, Kim, Rogosch and Cicchetti (2001) assessed 492 maltreated children and 322 nonmaltreated children between the ages of 5.5 and 11.5 years on a summer day camp research program in New York city. The maltreated children were identified from records from the Department of Social Services and the nonmaltreated children were recruited from needy families receiving aid, matched demographically with the maltreated children.

Their research assessed the children's internalising and externalising symptoms, aggression, withdrawal, and co-operative behaviour, as well as personality dimensions of ego-resiliency and egocontrol. Measures included the Child Behaviour Checklist (Teacher Form) to measure externalising and internalising behaviours (Achenbach, 1991), behaviour ratings based on naturalistic observations by trained camp counsellors, sociometric measures completed by peers and the California Child Q-Set to gain a measure of personality and social and cognitive functioning (Block & Block, 1969). Ego-resiliency is defined in this study as the ability to respond to the environment with flexibility, resourcefulness and responsivity. Ego-control is defined as the child's ability to modulate its feelings and impulses.

The MCS was used to analyse the severity of the maltreatment that the children experienced and within which subtype. It was also used to analyse the developmental period within which episodes of maltreatment occurred. Children with similar timing and patterns were grouped to analyse outcomes.

Manly et al's findings provide a lot of information about the short-term outcomes of children who are maltreated. However, follow-up is required to provide more long-term outcome data. Maltreated children were found to have more behaviour problems, were more aggressive, more withdrawn and were less co-operative than non-maltreated children. They had lower scores of ego-resiliency and more ego undercontrol than their non-maltreated peers, (i.e. they were less able to respond to their environments with flexibility, resourcefulness and responsivity and were less able to modulate their feelings and impulses than their non-maltreated peers). When the maltreated children were grouped on timing of onset of maltreatment, no groups were unaffected or positively affected by the experience of maltreatment, although different subtypes of abuse and different times of onset did result in more or less serious consequences.

Children who were only known to have experienced maltreatment during infancy (0-3 years) showed significantly more externalising symptoms, were more aggressive and less co-operative than non-maltreated children. The severity of emotional maltreatment and neglect were found to predict the symptoms of aggression, higher ego-undercontrol and lower ego-resilience. Manly et al concluded that very early maltreatment signified extreme risk due to the possible negative effect on attachment formation and on the development of the autonomous self, both of which occur in this stage of development. Maltreatment in this time may lead to insecure attachment relations and problems in self-system processes (Cicchetti, 1991a).

Manly et al (2001) found that physical abuse in pre-school children lead to externalising symptoms, aggression, low ego-resiliency and high ratings of ego-undercontrol (with reactive, impulsive patterns of engaging). Physical abuse was not found to be linked with internalising symptoms or withdrawal in this study. Internalising symptoms and withdrawn behaviour were found to be predicted by the

severity of physical neglect in the pre-school period. These children viewed relationships as unlikely to meet their needs and of themselves as unlovable and hence they tended to withdraw.

Attachment Theory offers a perspective on the negative impact of maltreatment on child development. Howe, Brandon, Hinings and Schofield (1999) discuss how an attachment figure who is unavailable psychologically or physically may lead to anxiety and distress within the child, high levels of attachment behaviour and a decrease in exploratory behaviour leading to adverse developmental consequences. Primary caregivers who maltreat their children are unlikely to meet the important determinants of attachment as described by Rosenblith (1992). These include the child's need to be fed, dry, warm, stimulated and to have power over its environment as well as to have a sense of personal control and of being able to shape its own social environment as an active participant (George, 1996).

Howe et al (1999) outline the role of the development of attachment relationships in providing opportunities for infants to develop mental representations or internal working models of the social world and of their own worthiness, based on people's availability and their provision of care and protection (Ainsworth, Blehar, Aters & Wall, 1978). It is hypothesised that the mental representations formed guide future behaviour and access to the social world. Maternal insensitivity, rejection, inaccessibility or intrusiveness, likely to be experienced by maltreated children, may lead to the formation of different attachment patterns as well as resulting in the use of defensive strategies which are developed to decrease distress and anxiety (Howe et al, 1999).

It is possible that children who have been maltreated or severely neglected may show insecure ambivalent-preoccupied attachments, with deep anxieties about their own worthiness and doubt that others are interested in them enough to be emotionally available when they are needed. They may present with behaviour problems, low self-esteem and tend to be prone to separation anxiety. This could develop through the caregiver being inconsistently and unpredictably responsive so that they miss the infant's distress signals. The carer's needs would determine the interaction between the parent and the child. As the carer's response is unlikely to

be connected to the child's behaviour, the child cannot use cognitive strategies to engage the parent and becomes affect dependent. With severe physical neglect, the child may become depressed and passive, presenting with developmental delay. In school these children may show poor attention, flit between activities and show high levels of anger over insignificant as well as significant events. They may be unpopular with peers and present with high levels of emotional demand. They may fail to understand the connection between their own and other people's feelings and behaviour and fail to see other people's perspectives.

Howe et al (1999) report that 80% of maltreated children present with disorganised, controlling and unresolved patterns of attachment. These patterns develop when the child fears the carer so that their source of security is also the source of 'fear'. Whatever strategy the child uses to gain closeness with its caregiver will usually result in anxiety and distress. This is particularly true of children who are physically abused. Children with this type of attachment learn to distrust adults, to dissociate from pain, do not learn to identify with people and hence fail to develop fully empathy, love or compassion. They may have learned how to interact primarily through violence and aggression (Keck & Kupecky, 1995). Children may resort to anger as being safe – they know how others respond to anger and may engage in defensive strategies, projecting blame onto others. Cicchetti, Toth and Hennessy (1989) report that children with these attachment difficulties are less cognitively competent and Lyons-Ruth (1996) suggests that co-morbidity with conduct problems leaves children especially prone to reading problems and verbal deficits.

3.2.3. Focusing on Physical Abuse

Revisiting the role of harsh discipline, Weiss, Dodge, Bates and Pettit (1992) concluded that harsh physical discipline was likely to lead to children becoming aggressive and to children developing a maladaptive style of processing social information which was in turn related to the development of aggression. They found that the more severe the physical discipline, the worse the child outcome.

Dodge, Bates, Pettit and Valente (1995) highlight the range of studies linking early physical abuse and later externalising problems including aggressive behaviour

(Egeland & Sroufe, 1981), conduct problems (Rogeness, Amrunga, Macedo, Harris & Fisher, 1986) and delinquency (Widom, 1989). They used a sample of 584 children identified through home interviews pre-kindergarten, who were physically abused in the first five years of life, as described by parents. The physical abuse was defined as an injury to a child by an adult requiring medical attention or leaving physical bruises. The aim of the study was to look at the developmental processes through which the physical abuse had its effects. Dodge, Pettit, McClaskey and Brown (1986) proposed a general model of social information processing with five sequential steps: encoding, interpretation, response accessing, response evaluation and enactment.

They proposed that within these five steps, physically abused children would develop patterns of:

- a) Inadequate coding of relevant cues because of hypervigilance for hostile cues;
- b) Hostile attributional bias about the intentions of others;
- c) Accessing a high proportion of aggressive responses from memory;
- d) Evaluating that aggressive responses lead to positive outcomes.

These first four steps would predict that enactment would be aggressive and negative resulting in externalising problems.

The study examined the children's social information processing using four instruments repeated annually, looking at children's processing in two different situations -provocations by peers and rebuff from peer group entry. This was done using video vignettes, cartoon stories and pictures of other social situations and the children were asked about how the protagonists might respond, how they might respond themselves if in that situation and to give as many likely responses as possible. The Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach, 1991) was used to assess the children's externalising behaviour and was completed by the children's teachers. Developmental history factors were also controlled for including ecological variables (Socio Economic Status of family, family stressors, maternal social support, number of adults in household and exposure to violence), child effect variables (infant health

pre and post natal, child temperament and using the Child Behaviour Checklist), as well as physical abuse.

Dodge et al (1995)'s findings were as follows:

One in eight children experienced physical abuse in the first five years of life and those children had a fourfold risk of developing externalising conduct problems in grades 3 and 4 (ages 7 – 9 years). The targeted ecological factors correlated with the occurrence of the abuse, and they were associated with the development of externalising problems. Dodge et al outlined that they did not account for the effect of the abuse on the measured outcomes in this study.

Dodge et al (1995) claim that the results are consistent with the model that physical abuse shapes the child's knowledge structures stored in their memory, which in turn shape information processing in future social interactions. Dodge et al describe how their results support the hypothesis that physically abused children become defensively hypervigilant to hostile cues and do not attend enough to non-hostile cues so that they attribute hostility to others when there is none. The child acquires a large number of aggressive responses which are highly accessible and so if provoked, they tend to act aggressively. The children then tend to evaluate the aggressive acts as leading to positive consequences for the attacker. Dodge et al (1995) do give the following caveats to their findings, that the statistical method used was correlational and hence there could be a third variable causing both effects rather than one being attributable to the other. They did not take into account the frequency, severity, harshness or identification of the abuse in the definitions used. They describe that the magnitude of the effect which they found is quite small, and that aggression is multi-determined as there are probably biological factors as well as socialising factors impacting on its development, i.e. aggression is highly unlikely to only be caused by physical abuse.

Salzinger, Feldman, Ng-Mak, Mojica and Stockhammer (2001) completed a study looking at the association between the physical abuse of children and their social and affective status. They hypothesised that children's social expectations and their social behaviour would mediate functioning in the domains of their social and affective status. Salzinger et al (2001) describe how the quality of support a child

receives from its parents and the relationships it encounters early in childhood, provide models of the way the social world works and provide strategies for negotiating it (Cicchetti, Lynch, Shonk & Manly, 1992). An abusive family network may provide cognitive and behavioural models of relationships which become the basis for establishing relationships with peers (Buehler, Krishnakumar, Anthony, Tittsworth & Stone, 1994). Smetana and Kelly (1989) found evidence for this in that abused children's understanding of social relationships was found to be different from that of their nonmaltreated peers. Crittenden (1998) described how they have learnt that people who are close and who you rely on can be hurtful. Downey, Feldman, Khuri and Friedman (1994) highlight that they learn that social relationships need not be positively reinforcing. Downey describes a factor "rejection sensitivity", i.e. that they overly anticipate rejection in relationships and Salzinger et al equate this to Dodge, Bates and Pettit's "hostile attribution bias" (1990). Salzinger et al hypothesise that abused children expect a negative response when they approach other children or adults and because of this, their social behaviour tends to be negative (either aggressive or withdrawing). These negative behaviours then lessen the expected negative experience of the social interaction. For example, if they fear that their social approach will be met with rebuff, they withdraw and avoid making the approach at all so not having to experience the rebuff. However, in practice, this reduces the chance for the abused children to experience positive interactions, to experience positive role models and it is negatively reinforcing for their peers who view them as children who avoid social interaction or respond aggressively when an approach is made (Brown and Kolko, 1999). If these hypotheses are correct, physically abused children's negative attributions should be positively associated with internalising symptomatology (for example withdrawal) and externalising behaviour problems (for example aggression).

In the current study, Salzinger et al (2001) measured an index of abusive behaviour (number and types of abusive behaviour, frequency, age of child, number of perpetrators). They found that these factors made no difference beyond the presence or absence of abuse to the outcome variables. They measured social preference (the popularity of the child), positive reciprocity (the number of positive choices of friends the child made which were reciprocated), peer rejection (negative

nominations of the child) and negative reciprocity (the number of negative choices received from peers chosen positively). Children's social expectations were gauged by comparing their perceptions of who would choose them positively and negatively against who really did, as well as social behaviour – externalising behaviour, prosocial behaviour and withdrawn behaviour (using the Child Behaviour Checklist, Achenbach, 1991).

Salzinger et al (2001) found that abused children were less likely to expect classmates to choose them positively, were more likely to behave aggressively and were less likely to engage in prosocial behaviour. It was hypothesised that their negative social expectations affected their social status and reciprocity directly and through influence on their antisocial and prosocial behaviour. Physically abused children were rated as more withdrawn although this was not a strong association. It is suggested that rather than a deviant and traumatic response, their withdrawal is as a "learned wariness of negative reactions from others that serves as a protective social factor" (p.819).

In summary, despite difficulties in drawing together the complex and extensive research in this area (e.g. differing definitions of maltreatment and problems with identifying control groups), some key points can be identified. It should however also be recognised that some children are maltreated and successfully cope with their early abusive experiences (McGloin & Widom, 2001). These children who follow a resilient trajectory are worthy of study in their own right to examine the interplay of factors promoting their more positive development.

So, to summarise;

- Maltreated children perform significantly below their peers in standardised tests and have poorer academic outcomes (Eckenrode et al, 1993). They are more likely to have behaviour problems, poor attendance, poor concentration, low self-esteem, low aspirations, are more likely to be socially isolated, withdrawn and show a fear and mistrust of adults (Leiter & Johnson, 1994). They are less able to respond adaptively to their

environments and to modulate their feelings and impulses (Manly et al, 2001).

- Neglected children appear to show the poorest academic outcomes, often presenting with internalising symptoms (e.g. anxiety and depression) and withdrawn behaviour (Eckenrode et al, 1993).
- Physically abused children are the most likely to present with discipline problems more aggressive behaviour, peer relationship problems and low self-esteem (Dodge et al, 1995; Salzinger et al, 2001). It is suggested that their aggressive and antisocial behaviours and their resulting social isolation is mediated through a maladaptive style of information-processing leading to a hostile attribution bias and rejection sensitivity.

4. Integrating Theory and Practice

This assignment has considered the evidence that education – both schools and LEA's – have child protection policy and procedure in place, but lack confidence and coherence in putting these into practice. The paper has then gone onto consider some of the research evidence looking at the maladaptive outcomes for maltreated children. The assignment will now attempt to bring these together through discussing possible roles and areas of future work for schools and Educational Psychologists

4.1. Schools

Thompson and Wyatt (1999) emphasise the need for teachers in schools to have a full understanding of the causes and consequences of maltreatment and of child protection services so that they can fully contribute to the effective support of maltreated children. This requires accurate recognition of need, an ability to work closely with other professionals and with a clear understanding of their work and agendas. However, staff in schools are under constant pressure to meet the needs of a range of complex children with limited time, resources and personnel. This pressure increases with additional attainment testing and the need to publish exam results.

Schools have a unique perspective in the assessment of children, being in the position of seeing and working with a range of children, across age groups on a daily basis. They can be closely connected with the communities and families from which the children come to the school.

Thompson and Wyatt (1999) emphasise the possible role of schools in prevention, in focusing on strengthening the parenting capacity of parents to promote the healthy development of all children, in a way which is culturally and socially sensitive to the environment in which the families are living, improving the links between different aspects of local communities. Thompson and Wyatt (1999) suggest a role for schools in providing a venue and a centre for a range of community initiatives such as youth clubs, parent support groups, childcare facilities, parenting classes and a home visiting programme which can support at risk families and children within their homes. This idea is based on that of the US Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect (1995). The location of schools, and also churches, in all communities and their accessibility to all aspects of the community would place them at an advantage for the introduction of such schemes.

The Children's Fund – introduced by the Children and Young People's Unit (C&YPU), is intended to contribute to a better start in life for children at risk of social exclusion. The funding, £380 million pounds, is targeted at preventive work for 5-13 year olds to encourage interagency work based within the community, providing support for children showing early signs of difficulty, building capacity within the community and actively involving children and parents in planning and delivering services to create individual packages of support (C&YPU, March 2001). Planning and provision of services using this funding within the U.K. could provide a vehicle for extending the capacity of schools to work in this way.

The NSPCC have set up an Education Programme which is focused on helping schools to develop policies and strategies which will help them to be able to listen and respond to children's emotional needs – 'a listening and responsive school'. These include having a child protection policy in line with that of their local Area Child Protection Committee, ensuring that all of those staff working with children have been subject to appropriate vetting procedures and have received training

about recognising abuse and handling disclosures, the effective use of PSHE and anti-bullying strategies such as peer support.

4.2. Educational Psychologists

German, Wolfendale and McLoughlin (2000) carried out a postal survey with 100 Principal Educational Psychologists, interviews with 19 specialist Educational Psychologists (EPs) (for Child Protection) and survey of 11 senior social workers and education welfare officers. Their analysis suggested that EPs were becoming increasingly involved in the areas of child protection and in developing multi-disciplinary links. This would support the British Psychological Society's recommendation that EPs have a responsibility with regard to the protection and promotion of children's welfare informing the appropriate agencies and working alongside them at all stages of the child protection process. This included drawing up treatment plans, implementation of plans, review and re-assessment. It would be interesting to carry out a similar survey to find out if this increase in working is occurring. It would also have been interesting if the survey had sought the views of non-specialist Educational Psychologists to look at the balance of this multi-disciplinary work with more traditional 'school-focused' work.

German et al (2000) highlight the role of EP's in delivering training, consultation to colleagues over casework and support about procedures to institutions. The specialist EPs surveyed by German et al suggested that generic EPs were less skilled in this area of work, lacking time, confidence and the training to be able to fully work in this area. As only 39% of the services surveyed had a specialist in this area this, if it were the case, would then raise concerns for the services where this was not true. However, it may be that having a specialist within a team draws experience and expertise away from other EPs in the team and services without a specialist may then have a team of EPs who are all more confident in this area of working. Other areas where EPs are involved in child protection work are as follows:

4.2.1. Assessment of Children:

As professionals supporting schools in the identification and assessment of children, Educational Psychologists see and work with many individual children as well as with groups and whole classes of children. The evidence visited above highlights an increasingly clear picture of abused children's functioning with maladaptive outcomes in several areas of their development; social, emotional, behavioural as well as academic. It highlights a desire and need for schools to be able to access consultation and advice about assessing children who they feel may be being abused. The evidence collected should lead to clearer and more purposeful assessment, using an interactionist framework to take into account a wider number of factors, including the environment at school and at home, the peer group, and the interaction of the factors in the child's life, as described in the Assessment Framework for children in need and their families (DOH, 2000). EPs can offer a range of assessment tools in these different domains and can support schools in their use, for example sociometric assessments with the child's class, playtime and classroom structured observations, work with the individual child to assess their social functioning and friendships and work with their parents. Rating scales and checklists can be used to assess a child's behavioural responses, completed by school staff, parents and other important adults who know the child well. In the domain of academic functioning, EPs can use a range of assessment tools, including cognitive assessments, standardised assessments as well as designing curriculum-based assessment tools to support the schools in their own assessment of the child. EPs can support the school in considering the child's emotional development and their developing sense of self. Jointly working with the schools and with other support staff through a comprehensive assessment based on a clear problem-solving framework and using evidence from research, can help clarify the thinking of school staff and support information gathering. This will then feed into the multi-agency working as described in the Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their families.

4.2.2. Supporting Schools in designing interventions for vulnerable children

The research highlighted difficulties for children where EPs can support the putting into place of interventions and their evaluation. These interventions may focus on children who are known to be experiencing or have experienced abuse as well as being put into place targeting whole classes and whole schools so that children who may be experiencing abuse which is unidentified and unknown to schools and other services can still benefit. These children may present with a range of special educational needs as highlighted in the research literature, but the cause of the presenting needs may not have been identified.

An example is given below of an intervention for a specific child or a group of children. This example is in the domain of social functioning and uses the framework suggested by Dodge et al (1995).

| Stage | Possible intervention |
|---------------------|---|
| Interpretation | An approach such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help the young person to be aware of and to re-evaluate their cognitions about the attributes of others. |
| Response Accessing | Social skills training and anger management training to teach the young person other responses which can then be accessed. |
| Response evaluation | Supporting the young person in being able to more accurately and neutrally evaluate their own behaviour and the effect it has on others. |
| Enactment | Social skills training using role modelling and practice to experience alternative behaviours emphasising prosocial behaviour, co-operation and group work. |

If focused on an individual child, the involvement of the peer group in interventions will be important as Dodge showed that the focus child's negative behaviours lead to peer rejection and therefore change is needed within the peer group as well as within the child.

Learning about emotions and ourselves, and about raising self-esteem will also be important for this group of vulnerable young people – a curriculum for emotional intelligence and conflict resolution would teach many of the skills which young people need in social situations. Similar approaches with individual children, classes and across whole schools can also contribute to improved behaviour and the teaching of non-aggressive responses to difficult situations.

To support deficits in academic skills, EPs can support schools and specialists teachers in devising programmes and packages based on classroom work to improve the basic skills of children. Again, these children may be identified as having experienced abuse but equally the same programmes may support children who present with learning difficulties for unknown reasons.

Some EPs may be appropriately placed to engage children and their families in therapeutic processes alongside colleagues from other agencies.

4.2.3. Dissemination of knowledge and working with teachers

Where school staff suspect that a child is being maltreated, they may feel helpless, that whatever they do will lead to minimal change for the child. However, evidence from resilience research supports our understanding and thinking about the interaction of risk and protective factors. For example, feeling valued by a respected adult (e.g. a teacher) and experiencing success at school can mediate higher levels of self-esteem which can act as a buffer to stress encountered in other areas, perhaps the home. Hence, the importance of schools where a vulnerable child may spend half of their waking hours, must not be underestimated. School can represent an area of normality and a safe haven. Research on the life trajectories of young people who were looked after (Jackson, 1994), highlights the importance of education for improving life outcomes. It is important for schools and other educational professionals to be aware that not all children who are maltreated show maladaptive outcomes and that some children illustrate a resilient trajectory because of the presence of protective factors and because of positive adaptation.

Educational Psychologists can play a role in disseminating the knowledge gained from research to teachers, education welfare officers, education officers and other professionals so that individual children who might be suffering abuse can be identified and sensitively supported. Schools often experience difficulties in feeling confident about their suspicions that a child might be being maltreated, resulting in delays in contacting social workers and initiating preventative actions (Birchall & Hallett, 1995). Clarity in the profile of maltreated children so that schools are more aware of the signs and the use of EPs to support the initial problem-solving might prove a useful role for EPs. Burton (1988) asked teachers to identify whom they would see as well-placed to deliver child protection training. Educational Psychologists were identified as key professionals working in this area. This often involved working across agencies alongside colleagues in Health and Social Services.

5. Concluding Comments

In conclusion, schools and Local Education Authorities may be well-placed in terms of having policies and procedures in place. However, there does appear to be an identified gap between what is in place, what happens when concerns are formulated and the confidence felt when these procedures are actually required. In terms of the lack of confidence felt about identifying the signs of abuse and putting into place school-based interventions to help vulnerable pupils, the research about maltreated children gives clear indicators for areas where these young people may be having difficulty and where schools can play a vital role. Children are not only likely to have academic and behaviour difficulties, but also difficulties within their peer group which schools are particularly well-placed to support. Co-ordination of support could include the bringing together of the child's Individual Education Plan and their care plan. Educational Psychologists are professionals within Education who have the skills and knowledge to support schools, alongside other key professionals in developing this role. Educational Psychologists, both specialists and generic practitioners should be engaging in this most challenging work to support some of our most vulnerable children.

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APPENDIX

Defining subtypes of Abuse

1. Physical abuse or physical injury:

Malinosky-Rummell and Hansen (1993) provide the following definition of physical abuse - the presence of a non-accidental injury resulting from acts of commission by an adult (Kelly, 1983) characterised by overt physical violence or excessive punishment (including poisoning and exposure to extremes of temperature). The Department of Health (1999) definition includes likely physical injury as well as actual, or failure to prevent physical injury as reasons for registering a child on the child protection register within this category.

The definition of physical abuse provides particular challenges due to the difficulty in deciding the borderline between abuse and nonabuse (Lamphear, 1985). Leach (1999) highlights that an angry man hitting his partner could be sentenced by a court of law for assault whereas the same physical act perpetrated on his child could be labelled discipline. Physical punishment as opposed to physical abuse would be defined as “the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child’s behaviour” (Strauss, 1996). Leach (1999) reports that studies find that up to 75% of babies are smacked before their first birthdays and around 97% of four year-olds are hit. Even by 11 years of age, half of children are physically punished (Leach, 1999). Nobes and Smith (1997) reported that 20% of a sample of children, including those as young as one year old, were hit with implements in a large UK study. In the same study, 40% of children had also been subject to physical restraint, including being held under a cold shower, 40% to punishment by example (e.g. hair-pulling and biting) and 12%, punishment by ingestion, for example, force-feeding or washing the mouth out with soap.

Weiss, Dodge, Bates and Pettit argue for conceptualising harsh discipline and physically abusive behaviour along a continuum, so that the effects of the full range of physical harm can be considered, especially given that physical discipline is much more common than physical abuse. Given Leach’s summarising of the effects

of physical punishment (1999) that children who were punished showed an increase in anti-social behaviour (e.g. Brezina, 1998), this would appear to be a useful suggestion.

In looking at the prevalence of childhood physical abuse, the NSPCC (2000) sampled 2869 young adults aged between 18 and 24 about their experiences of being violently treated, enough to lead to physical effects the following day. Of the sample, 6% of boys and 8% of girls had experienced such treatment. There was a clear social class gradient with those from lower social classes experiencing more violent treatment.

2. Physical neglect

Manly, Kim, Rogosch and Cicchetti (2001) utilised the definition of physical neglect as the failure of a responsible adult to meet a child's needs for food, clothing, shelter, medical, dental or mental health care, education, adequate hygiene or physical safety. The DOH (1999) include that the neglect results in significant impairment of the child's health or development, including a failure to thrive.

3. Emotional maltreatment

The DOH (1999) defines emotional abuse as the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and social development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional maltreatment or rejection. Manly et al (2001) included incidents involving persistent or extreme thwarting of children's emotional needs, including the need for psychological safety and security, for acceptance and self-esteem and for age-appropriate autonomy.

4. Sexual abuse

Manly et al (2001) used the following as inclusion within the subtype of sexual abuse: any sexual contact or attempted sexual conduct occurring between an adult

and child, ranging from exposure to inappropriate sexual activities to forced intercourse.

Reflections on Personal and Professional Development as an Educational Psychologist within an Educational Psychology Service: The Impact of Doctoral Training

1. Introduction

The aim of this assignment is to consider the author's professional development as an Educational Psychologist (EP) since qualifying in September 1997, with a particular focus on the period between January 2000 when she started the Doctorate in Educational Psychology and the current time. Changes in practice highlighted by 360° feedback and by Appraisal will be considered in light of developments in personal circumstances as well as in terms of the Doctorate programme. The assignment will then discuss the contributions of these two issues and will conclude that there are difficulties evaluating any causal links between the Doctorate programme and practice development given those personal changes. However, the Doctorate has contributed to increased confidence in research skills and has opened up avenues of further interest and of continuing professional development. It has also contributed to reflections around the author's identity as a psychologist, as well as as a researcher.

In considering professional development, the 360° feedback process was used as well as the information and evidence available from Appraisals over the same period. In covering the above the following issues will be addressed by this assignment:

- Why the evaluation of *individual performance* is important within the context of the evaluation of service effectiveness.
- Why the evaluation of *service effectiveness* is important.
- The role of appraisals and 360° feedback as tools for evaluating individual performance within this framework.
- How the 360° feedback tool was used in the context of performance review and appraisal within one Educational Psychology Service in a Shire Authority.

- How personal circumstances and the Doctorate programme impacted on the professional practice and development of the author.

2. Context and Practice

2.1 The researcher's role

The author qualified as an Educational Psychologist in 1997 from University College London and joined a shire Authority Educational Psychology Service as a main scale EP. She worked in this generic role for two years before being appointed to the role of Specialist Educational Psychologist for Looked After Children for half of the time whilst continuing to work as a generic EP for the remainder. After a further year the author was successful in applying for a management position and became the Senior EP for School Improvement within the service, with a small patch of schools and line management responsibilities alongside strategic development. The author has continued in this role until the current time although taking two periods of maternity leave, between January 2002 and August 2003 and then between September 2003 and April 2004. Since returning in August 2002, she has reduced her hours to work part-time, balancing work and childcare. There have been changes within the role but within the same overall job specification.

The author started the Doctorate course in Educational Psychology at University College London in January 2000.

2.2. Appraisal and 360° Feedback within the Local Education Authority context

When the author first joined the service in 1997, personal development as an EP was considered within a framework of performance management with annual appraisals and termly reviews running alongside the supportive dimensions of peer consultation and, for newly qualified EPs, line management supervision. From autumn 1998, the performance reviews were intended to include 360° feedback information as well as output and outcome measures and self-recording of other achievements (Sharpe, Frederickson & Laws, 2000). The

system incorporating 360° feedback was set up as a process intended to support the development of staff through “self reflection on the delivery of a professional service to others and using others’ feedback as a mirror reflecting perceptions’ of our work” (Service Guidelines, June 1998). Line management and pay and promotion issues were separated from development issues and the senior EP facilitating the programme was not involved in providing formal feedback through appraisals. Pay and promotion issues, (e.g. decisions regarding incremental progressions) were addressed by the chief EP who read all of the appraisals.

The 360° feedback questionnaires were developed through a working group of EPs and admin staff generating work desirable behaviours together with analysis of job descriptions, service guidelines, the BPS core curriculum for three year training and evidence from a review of the literature around effective interpersonal behaviours for school focussed consultation. A construct elicitation exercise was lead with headteachers and a collection of importance ratings was gained from Senior EPs and Principal EPs at a conference in January 1999. Items were eliminated with lots of ‘don’t know’ ratings or low importance ratings or items which did not discriminate between the top performing EP’s and those at the bottom. Factor analysis was used to re-organise the questionnaire and to eliminate duplicating items. The questionnaires were then piloted.

The implementation of 360° feedback did not run smoothly. The following questionnaires were developed : a questionnaires for EPs, a questionnaire for members of the Management and Leadership Team, a questionnaire for administrative colleagues, a questionnaire for Assistant EPs and a questionnaire for pupils to rate EP’s. However, the departure of the chief EP and the senior EP (Research and Development), who had been leading on the implementation within the team contributed to the questionnaires not being put into place within the performance review cycle as planned. Performance reviews continued with a link area senior rather than with the senior (Research and Development) and the system became embroiled with the county council's performance management system (where targets needed to be very explicitly linked with the team plan, the service plan and the county council’s plan).

Currently, 360° feedback is being used as a development tool to give EPs process information about the way others perceive them. It is currently used

within the performance review process although outside of Appraisals. The whole team were consulted about how it should be implemented to enhance commitment and ownership. There is a system administrator to protect the anonymity of the raters and those carrying out appraisals receive training so that they can act as facilitators. The whole team have used the questionnaires which have contributed to the six month performance reviews though the academic year 2003-2004.

Having completed the MSc at UCL as well as being enrolled in the DEdPsy programme, the author has had the opportunity to use 360° feedback four times. Data from three of these occasions will be considered in part 3 – Integrating Theory and Practice, alongside information from Appraisals and theory to reflect around professional development.

3. Psychological Theory

Given the limited scope of this assignment, it will now focus on the role of 360° feedback and performance management in terms of professional development. The role of supervision will not be considered within this assignment.

3.1 Service Evaluation

Why should EP services and other LEA support services be concerned with evaluating their performance? Gray (2001) completed national research on behalf of the DfES and NASEN to look at how support services are currently evaluated. He considered the need to evaluate given the increasing context of accountability within which such services now operate, the political agenda for increasing inclusion and increasing delegation of funding to schools. Support Services are likely to need to show that they can offer high quality and cost-effective services to children, young people and their families, in line with Best Value. Fagan and Wise (1994) cite three reasons for improving accountability; to modify and renew professional practice; to improve the efficiency of service delivery mechanisms and to demonstrate value for money, but all within the context of helping psychologists to make more effective decisions in supporting children. They highlight the sense of responsibility, both professional and ethical

which most EPs bring to their work which encourages EPs to reflect on their work and to consider ways of improving.

Gray (2001) argues that it is likely to be better for support services to be involved in developing their own methodology for evaluation, rather than having a system imposed upon them by others who are unlikely to understand the complexity of the role and of the contribution which support services, including educational psychology services make to the attainment of children and schools. The importance of including formative assessment alongside this more summative assessment is also highlighted. The formative aspects of assessment whereby what worked and what did not work is considered, alongside the identification of key issues and aspects which could have affected performance; contribute to the development of new team practices as well as to individual appraisal and continuing professional development. A service will not be truly effective without well-supported high quality individual practitioners.

The performance management system, incorporating appraisals, is seen as contributing to the evaluation of service effectiveness through allowing for the monitoring of individuals' contributions to achieving service development goals, alongside professional development needs. However, Gray (2001) highlights that currently, service planning and review tends to be task-orientated, reviews including whether tasks have been achieved rather than considering outcomes, for pupils, teachers or schools. The challenge for services is to link this planning with the measurement of outcomes to know whether services are truly effective, using a range of measures, different audiences and incorporating quantitative as well as more qualitative feedback about outputs, outcomes and process / good practice measures.

Therefore services do need to evaluate their effectiveness and considering the impact of individual practitioners' performance contributes to this through Appraisal.

3.2 Appraisal within EP Services

Thompson and Wills (1994) and Webster (2001) consider the need for appraisal systems within public sector services, including Educational Psychology Services.

Appraisal is seen as a process of identifying and emphasising quality, enabling the celebration of success and increasing job performance and motivation. However, it can also be seen as a control device used to identify under-performing individuals (Thompson & Wills, 1994). Appraisal therefore needs to be considered and implemented with care and sensitivity. For EPs there is often discomfort around the idea of performance being judged on "nominally negotiated criteria" on which basis the individual will be criticised or rewarded and where the EP has no choice about who will be making those judgements and through what process (Imich, Marshall & Wright, 1992).

Webster (2001) carried out a survey of one third of EP services in England and Wales, using telephone and face-to-face interviews to investigate the Appraisal systems in use within services. He found that 79% of EP services surveyed had Appraisal systems and 87% of these were referred to as Appraisal or performance development processes. In some services these were related to service development and management and they were then called performance management interviews. Only 25% of EP services had a unique system, the majority falling within a county council scheme.

Of these systems or schemes, 100% included a personal interview, 82% included a facet of self-appraisal (often a questionnaire completed by the appraisee and discussed with the line manager), 16% included peer appraisal (for example, discussion of performance with a peer prior to the interview with the line manager), 13% included 360° feedback, 9% observations by others and 7% looking at written records. In all cases, continuing professional development opportunities for the year were agreed and in 89% of schemes personal targets were set. In 47% of schemes, competency was discussed.

Webster's (2001) research highlighted the difficulty relating outcomes in EP practice to inputs and that managers often only have indirect knowledge of actual EP practice. This can have implications for the judgements made about such practice.

Other issues encountered by EP services introducing appraisal schemes were highlighted by individual reviews and included the importance of processes being introduced after wide and informed consultation rather than being imposed

top-down, the need for precise targets for development to be set, and the need for the collection of information from customers of the service (Imich, Marshall & Wright, 1992). Thompson and Wills' (1994) paper looking at the development of an appraisal system in Avon highlighted several issues which included : the need for balancing the EP's sense of professional autonomy with a need for accountability; the need for the data collection to be seen as able to provide adequate challenge or constructive support; competent management of the process of Appraisal, ensuring two-way feedback of information so that issues identified can be fed into team development where appropriate and a need for core competencies and performance criteria to be identified.

3.3 Appraisal as a process

In terms of critically reflecting on development either individually or within the Appraisal process, information is required about the employee's performance. This could include self-evaluation and reflection on work completed, processes encountered and skills developed, or can be contributed to by others. Self-evaluation is a useful and unique source of information in the appraisal process although there are several systematic sources of bias, for example, leniency error (Meyer 1980), restriction of range (Thornton, 1980) and halo error (Holzbach, 1978). It can be subject to self-serving biases whereby managers will tend to rate themselves more highly than others might judge them (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988).

Feedback from others is suggested to be critical as little change in behaviour can be expected without feedback from others (London & Beatty, 1993). The most common process for adding information from others is via ratings by superiors, as within performance management systems. This can take the form of information collected about employee outputs as within management monitoring and quality assurance, reflections by superiors with their own views of the employee's development, or ratings. Increasingly the views of others (not just superiors) are being incorporated within systems of reviewing development. These include the views of peers and of subordinates (especially in the case of managers). Bemadin, Dahirius and Redmon (1993) suggest that looking at the views of a number of people can be more motivating to action and can reduce discrepancies between raters.

3.4 The Process of 360° Feedback

The 360° feedback process is a form of multi-rater feedback - an approach where managers compare self-perceptions with how others see them (London & Beatty, 1993). The 360° feedback process gives information on leadership behaviours from multiple sources which can then be judged alongside information on measures of business success. It involves self-evaluation, feedback from peers and colleagues, from clients and from staff that are line managed or appraised. Considering the Johari window, 360° feedback is said to highlight the blind spot, bringing out issues which others know but which the individual does not know.

Figure1: The Johari Window

OTHERS

SELF

| | Know | Don't know |
|------------|--------|------------|
| Know | arena | Blind spot |
| Don't know | façade | unknown |

It can allow comparison of information within the arena, checking for discrepancies between self-perceptions and the perceptions of others and consideration of self-perceptions with what others 'don't know', (i.e. information within the façade).

The 360° process is seen as a valuable alternative to either self-evaluation or supervisory appraisal. McEvoy and Buller (1987) discuss its use and highlight that it can be used solely for developmental purposes as well as for monitoring, evaluation and compensation adjustment. Multi-rater feedback can give managers information about the 'how' of managerial effectiveness, (i.e. the processes and behaviour resulting in outcomes) as long as the questionnaires are designed well enough to elicit this kind of information (London & Beatty, 1993). Multi-rater feedback is also seen to be advantageous compared to gaining feedback from one or two sources. This is because the averaging of lots of values in 360° feedback is less subject to bias (Dunnette, 1993) than making judgements based on a value given by one source of feedback.

3.4.1 Who should be asked to rate?

Correlations between the perceptions of superiors and peers tend to be better than between self and superior or self and peers. Harris and Schaubroeck (1988) carried out a meta-analysis of studies of 360° feedback and found that there are high correlations between peer and superior ratings, moderately high ratings between self and superior ratings and between self and peer ratings. Self-peer and self-superior ratings were particularly low for managerial and professional staff as opposed to blue collar or service workers.

Borman (1974) suggests that different raters observe different areas of work and performance and therefore high rater agreement should not be expected. Furnham and Stringfield's (1998) study appears to agree with this. They discuss how the amount of time people work together and in what circumstances can effect ratings. In their study of 56 managers, raters had irregular and infrequent contact with participants and therefore did not have better data on those participants than did superiors. They suggest that differences between ratings can be explained by the experience and evidence each rater has for each behaviour being rated. In addition within this study, participants were rated by consultants who were part of the teams constructed to work together, but who were not part of the organisation. The consultants' ratings of the managers were lower than those of other raters suggesting that they held a more critical and disinterested position and that organisational structures and influences could affect ratings. Alternatively, it may be that those within the organisation have a better understanding of the organisational context and pressures and hence are more supportive and positive in rating their managers.

London and Beatty (1993) highlight that different groups are a valuable source of feedback information to help managers reflect upon their behaviour. Subordinates observe and are affected by manager's behaviour and decisions in ways which may not be obvious to superiors. They suggest that superiors are more likely to infer manager's performance based on the performance of the 'work unit' rather than to be guided by their actual behaviour. Hence both subordinates and superiors will be drawing on different evidence bases in inferring ratings about a manager.

It may be that different participants will find different raters more or less useful depending upon the questions being asked and the context within which they are working. Saveedra and Kwin (1993) suggest that specific groups may find peer ratings useful – groups where individuals work on pooled or separated tasks and need feedback about the specialised group-member roles to make adjustments so that processes can be most effective. Similarly, in supervisory appraisal the manager may lack a complete overview of the appraisee's work, only being able to judge performance in a restricted area of work and then drawing conclusions from those.

Fahr, Dobbins and Cheung (1991) found evidence of a 'modesty bias' in Taiwan with Chinese employees rating their performance less favourably than their superiors. This result was found to be consistent and different from American samples. Furnham and Stringfield (1998) used an overlapping data set and found no significant gender or cultural differences between Chinese and European managers' performance as rated by superiors suggesting that unlike American populations, Europeans may show a similar modesty bias.

3.4.2 Benefits of using of 360° feedback

This form of multi-rater feedback can prove valuable through providing a vehicle for enhancing two-way communications – both formal and informal between managers and their teams. It can improve the effectiveness of working relationships between managers and employees and increase opportunities for employee involvement. It provides a vehicle for discussing 'undiscussables' with a manager (Hogan & Morris, 1991) and hence provides for more open and honest communication. If set up and used in a meaningful way, it can demonstrate respect for employee / team opinion, giving members of teams an opportunity to rate the leadership and managerial behaviour of their direct line managers. This can contribute to the development of a more participative team culture. Finally it can lead to improved leadership and managerial behaviour which, in turn, will lead to improved outputs and outcomes as well as to the advantages listed above.

3.4.3 Problems with 360° Feedback

The process of 360° feedback is costly in terms of the time and money required for implementation and preparation. It adds complexity to the developmental process, through the dissemination of forms and the collation and interpretation of data. There could be risks to those receiving ratings as it is suggested that negative feedback could be more damaging for those being rated than, for example from a single manager, as it is from chosen raters and from multiple sources. Raters take risks in terms of taking chances with giving honest feedback (is it truly anonymous?). The use of 360° feedback can establish expectations that behaviours will change, which although positive in most circumstances means that implementation needs to be thought through and meant rather than it being embraced as an add-on system for impression purposes. As for any system where ratings are being interpreted, it can become a vehicle for selective perception and information distortion.

Hazucha, Hezieff and Schneider (1993) highlight the need for any system of 360° feedback to support issues identified with agreed actions and follow through. The feedback process will only work if it is part of a supportive process which supports interpretation of the feedback and the setting of improvement goals (Antonioni, 1996). It only gives maximum benefit if research-based guidelines are followed rather than being implemented as a programme designed to meet the needs or goals of management. One example of this would be ratings and feedback being truly anonymous (as in research-based guidelines) rather than being identifiable where fear of reprisal would be likely to produce inflated ratings and would therefore decrease validity (Antonioni, 1994). The guidelines suggest the need for objective criteria to select raters so that there is some measure of representativeness of the sample being asked for their ratings. Finally, there is a need to acknowledge that the rater is not always right or consistent, although using more raters should decrease any bias from odd ratings and should balance views.

3.5 Summary

In summary, to compare the two sources of data for reviewing my personal and professional development over the last six years, the assignment pulls together a table based on London and Beatty (1993).

Figure 1: Similarities and differences between 360° feedback and performance appraisal

| | 360° Feedback | Performance Appraisal |
|--------------|--|---|
| Similarities | Both involve reports of behaviours and judgements of performance based on results. Both can use rating scales and can therefore be subject to issues of bias and validity including response consistency, leniency, halo and stereotyping (Borman, 1974). | |
| Differences | <p>Can be evaluative, but more often developmental. Information not necessarily shared with superior.</p> <p>Managers compare self-ratings with the ratings of others, including subordinates, often well placed to comment on leadership behaviours.</p> <p>Multiple ratings allow testing of consistency of behaviours and also increased reliability of data gathered.</p> <p>Can be useful in terms of looking at discrepancies and gaps between differing viewpoints. Also weight of numbers can facilitate change.</p> | <p>Primarily for evaluation leading to organisational consequences including pay, other jobs, transfer and promotions.</p> <p>Judgements are based on superior's ratings only.</p> <p>Single ratings by superior can be very subjective and based on only one view of performance.</p> <p>Not geared to improving leadership behaviours – not very good in development and career planning.</p> |

4. Integrating Theory and Practice

The assignment will now present a summary of the information collected through Appraisal and performance management as well as through 360° feedback. Data was collected at two different periods of time. Firstly, when the author was working as a specialist EP for looked after children before the start of the Doctorate programme and secondly as an established senior EP, in the final year of the Doctorate programme and preparing for a second maternity leave. Links will then be explored between the 360° feedback and appraisal information, specific personal and professional developments and the Doctorate programme. Finally, the usefulness of the two systems for reviewing performance and skills within the context of a shire authority will be considered.

4.1 Evaluating performance management and appraisal as a development tool

The performance management system in this authority was introduced from above with discussions amongst the management team about how it should be put into place, in terms of who should manage who and when reviews should be carried out. Appraisees encountered different experiences depending on the varying styles of individual managers. There was no system for reviewing consistency of practice although the Principal EP viewed all of the write-ups of appraisal interviews and six month reviews.

For the author the following strengths and development areas were identified.

Table 1: Strengths and development areas identified through Appraisals

| Date | Timing in career / DEdPsy | Strengths | Development Areas |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| October 1998 | Beginning of 2 nd year – before DEdPsy | Balance of work Effective time management Follows service procedures Competent and confident member of the EPS Good relationships with schools through project work Critical friend approach | Delegating work to admin support Preparation when overbooked Knowledge of looked after children Knowledge of organisational psychology and the management development programme |
| November 1999 | Beginning of 3 rd year – specialist EP LAC, just before start of DEdPsy in Jan 2000 | Flexibility Statutory work in on time Excellent performance in juggling demands High quality work at all levels | |
| July 2000 | End of 3 rd year – specialist EP, LAC and 1 st year of DEdPsy | Flexible prioritisation | Knowledge and skills in MLT roles |
| July 2001 | End of 1 st year as senior EP, 4 th year as an EP, 2 nd year of DEdPsy | Excellent support to EPs, senior EPs and to others on Learning Support Strategic Management Team (SMT). | |

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|--|
| | | Increased confidence in SMT participation | |
| October 2002 | Returning from maternity leave as a 0.5 senior EP. 3 rd year of DEdPsy | Line management role successfully implemented. Calm, determined, unflappable, objective, productive, collaborative relationships, clarity of thinking | Improved confidence and range in supervision |

In considering the process and the feedback received as detailed in Table1, the only information contributing to the developmental aspect of the appraisal process was self-evaluation with a small amount of feedback from the line manager, based only on any feedback from schools and observations of the work of the EP within team meetings and in the office (for example, observations about relationships with EP and administrative colleagues). There was little comment on the development of skills and in the author's opinion, little reflection around any identified need for continuing professional development – this was mostly covered by discussion around areas of interest and included planning for attending courses or completing the Management Development Programme / Doctorate. There was little reflection about practice apart from in the area of time management. For the author, the final review was the only one where the line manager gave significant reflections on the author's skills as an EP. Targets set were linked only to the team plan and service plan or to areas of interest and, although acknowledged to be valuable, did not feel very beneficial in terms of professional development as an EP.

4.2 Evaluating 360° Feedback as a development tool

4.2.1 Feedback using the generic questionnaire

The analysis of the 360°feedback data will start with consideration of the feedback gained about the researcher's generic EP practice. This feedback was gained at two time intervals. The first was in December 1999 when the author was working as a specialist EP for Looked After Children but with a patch of schools, just before the start of the Doctorate programme. The second was in April 2003 when the author was working as a senior EP, but with some of the same schools and headteachers.

Figure 2: Mean performance scores on each of the sections of the 360° questionnaire rated by self and others in 1999 and in 2003.

| | | Interpersonal and communication skills | Professional Knowledge and Practice | Work Organisation and Management | Ethics and Equal Opportunities |
|--|------|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Self | 2003 | 3.6 [3.6] | 3.4 [3.3] | 3.5 [3.9] | 4.0 [4.0] |
| Others | 1999 | 5.1 | 4.9 | 5.1 | 5.5 |
| | 2003 | 4.5 | 4.0 | 4.6 | 5.3 |
| Difference in mean ratings (2003 – 1999) | | -0.6 | -0.9 | -0.5 | -0.2 |

The data was not made available for 'self' in 1999. Although self-ratings completed in November 2000 are presented below those from 2003 in brackets for comparison. It can be seen that apart from in the area of Work Organisation and Management, self-ratings are very consistent between 2000 and 2003. The increase seen in the self-ratings of Work Organisation may be a reflection of the extra year in practice or of the juggling of two half-time roles which was occurring at that time.

It can be seen that all ratings are at least between the ratings of 3 and 4 (described as 'moderately well' and 'well') and that ratings by others are all between 4 ('well') and 6 ('exceptionally well'). The results should therefore be celebrated. However, ratings of performance by others are lower in 2003 than in 1999 in all areas. Whether the differences are statistically significant or not, it is interesting to consider possible reasons for the trends and patterns seen.

The decrease in ratings could reflect a true deterioration in the author's performance. Input from the appraisal process would not suggest that this was the case, although feedback from individual school staff do not form part of the appraisal process (i.e., the two processes use different data sources). It may be that the increasing range of work undertaken, through the specialist post and then the management duties had lead to a deterioration in school-based

practice, either through the increasing pressure and stress of balancing multiple roles (including motherhood), the pressures of part-time working and not being available for schools in the same way.

It should be taken into account that although some of the school staff involved in the process were the same in 1999 and in 2003, in other cases different people were involved and hence the 2003 raters may have been more critical in their ratings. Also, in 1999 EP colleagues contributed to the ratings, whereas in 2003 Headteachers and SENCOs alone completed the questionnaires. Perhaps school colleagues were more critical than EP colleagues or perhaps they had a better view of our practice in schools. Alternatively perhaps they did not have such a good understanding of the constraints of the EP role and hence were more critical. This situation appears parallel to that of the consultants in Furnham and Stringfield's (1998) study, rating managers within teams, but from outside of the organisation, as reported in 3.4.1 above.

Changes in personal EP practice and more generally in the profession (e.g. because of the new Code of Practice for SEN (2001)), may have effected school's ratings. The author's practice may have developed in ways which school staff were not in agreement with, for example, seeing and assessing less individual children and being less involved in decisions relating to statutory assessments. Finally, it may be that the school raters were effected by increasing negativity and cynicism with the support which they received from the services in the Authority in general. This may have impacted on the performance ratings given through the influences of increasing delegation of LEA services and repeated restructuring of the services.

The assignment now considers the individual items from the 360° questionnaires which were highlighted as areas to be 'celebrated' or to be 'fixed'. Please see Appendix 1, Table A for the 5 items nominated by self and others in each area.

Agreement between self and others:

In 1999, there was agreement for one celebration item "treats people with respect" and one fix-it item "aware of impact of behaviour on others". Four other

fix-it items were therefore identified by others but not by the author. Only one of these was then identified in 2003 which could mean that the other areas were no longer perceived as concerns.

In 2003 there was agreement between self and other on one celebration item “follows through on commitments” but no fix-it item. Five fix-it items were therefore identified by others which the author had not identified and which could form the basis for future targets for development (see below).

Agreement between self over time:

The author felt that she was able to develop effective working relationships in 1999 and also in 2003. There was one fix-it item identified which was the same in 1999 and 2003 which was “practice is based on appropriate knowledge and theory”. This was in some ways surprising as this was probably one of the drivers for the author to complete the Doctorate programme, to improve professional knowledge and to inform practice, especially having completed a psychology degree within four terms which was considerably less than for some other courses. Whether this was really an issue or whether this was a reflection of a lack of confidence in the author’s own theoretical background is unclear. Either way, it suggests another area to address. The fact that the other three fix-it items identified in 1999 were not identified in 2003 could be seen as positive as it suggested that things which were felt to need fixing in 1999 were no longer identified as issues in 2003.

Agreement between others over time:

There was agreement that “being clear about what elements of work are confidential” was an area to be celebrated in 1999 and 2003 as was “treating people with respect” and “showing a commitment to equal opportunities”.

“Working with individuals and groups to identify practical ways of addressing their concerns” was identified in both 1999 and 2003 as an area to be fixed and this could now tie in with the author thinking more about the model of consultation which was being used in schools. The author does try and bring those working with a child together to consider practical strategies, however, this area may need more work or to be more explicitly explained to schools. This

would also fit in with addressing two of the other areas to be fixed - “explains how she will address needs identified” and “works with people to identify possible solutions to her concerns”. The final area to be fixed, as identified by others in 2003, was interesting and the author was not sure what to think of it. This was “knows own strengths and limitations”. The author did not feel that she tried to practice outside of her sphere of competence and was not aware of any occasions where this had been a problem. The author felt that she had always been happy to say when she didn’t know something or to go away and find out about something, from colleagues or from a book. However, when the original ratings given are studied, it can be seen that the mean score given by others for this item was 3.5 which is within the ‘moderately well’ category. It is therefore worthy of reflection, but within that context.

The generic questionnaire was also used by the author with staff in social services. This assignment will not discuss the results of that process although a summary of the results are presented in Appendix 2 *"Feedback from staff in social services using the generic questionnaire"*.

4.2.2 Feedback using the Management Questionnaire

Finally 360° feedback data was collected using the Principal /Senior Educational Psychologist questionnaire. It was felt that this would be useful in terms of future management development as when appointed to the senior’s post, many of the management duties were taken out of the role as it was felt that the author did not have the necessary expertise or experience to complete them. However, the author was soon line managing eight EPs and a mentoring consultant, with little support apart from that available from other senior colleagues within a mentoring group. Reflecting back on that time as a new Senior, it was a very difficult time to take on that role with little support. The service was undergoing structural changes through being ‘merged’ to some extent with other teams to form ‘Learning Support’ and the Chief EP at the time had a management style which did not sit comfortably with many of the team. Therefore it felt, at times, as if seniors were being expected to fulfil different roles and abide by decisions with which they did not necessarily agree.

Completing the 360° feedback in April 2003, as a senior EP, things were very different. The author felt much more confident about being able to fulfil the role

of senior EP within the team – in terms of line managing and supervising EPs and with a new Principal EP with a different approach. However, the author experienced the additional difficulties of balancing working part-time, childcare and trying to collect data and write up the Doctoral research thesis all within a year due to having had a baby the previous year. These pressures, alongside preparation for a second maternity leave, lead to new and additional challenges which were likely to impact on the performance of the author as a senior EP. In April 2003 senior colleagues and EPs who were line managed by the author were asked to complete the 360° feedback management questionnaires. The results are presented below.

Figure 3: Comparisons of the mean performance scores given by self and others on the Principal / Senior EP questionnaires

| | Empathic leadership | Team management | Strategic development | Communication style |
|--------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Self | 3.4 | 3.3 | 3.0 | 2.8 |
| Others | 5.3 | 4.9 | 5.1 | 4.8 |

It can be seen that the ‘others’ ratings were more positive about the author’s skills in all four areas than she was herself. Whether this reflected the modesty bias identified in Chinese workers by Fahr et al (1991), an over-generosity by colleagues or a lack of self-confidence in the author’s own management abilities is not clear. Please see Appendix 3, Table D for the individual items to be fixed or celebrated as identified by self and others.

In reflecting on the individual items presented in Table D, “fosters an atmosphere of mutual support” is seen as the top area to be celebrated by self and by colleagues. This may have been related to the context and environment in which the author developed as a senior as referred to above, whereby mutual support within the team was a means of surviving the low levels of staffing and the demands of the system. “Provides a clear rationale for decisions” is also identified by both self and others. The author was pleased about this as she felt this was always an aim, to ensure that decision-making was explicit and open. It was interesting to note that others identified “values and motivates colleagues” as a strength whereas the author had identified this as an area to be fixed.

Both self and others agreed that “uses an active leadership style to build team loyalty and motivation” was an area to be fixed and the author may need to consider how to target development in this area. The other areas identified by others for improvement were, it was felt, very fair and may have reflected the author’s own feelings about part-time working. It was acknowledged that it was difficult to be involved, to the same degree, in the service and wider LEA developments and the author needed to rely, in part, on other colleagues within the management team for information to update staff who were line managed.

In summary, reflecting back on the 360° feedback process helped the author to identify the following issues:

School-based work: The results suggested that skills in this area may have deteriorated since 1999. However, this needed to be seen within the context of ratings being above the possible mean of 3 for all ratings from others. The possible reasons for this deterioration were briefly discussed and it may be useful to consider the personal changes which may have impacted on practice in more detail in looking at this issue. This will include reflecting on personal life changes, the effects of these on working, development as a manager and participation on the Doctorate course.

Areas to target for future development included explaining how actions and interventions lead from assessment and addressing concerns in more practical ways, giving more concrete explanations.

Management: The results suggested that the author had many strengths in this area although areas to work on were identified, for example, the need to consider how information could be fed through to the people line managed, especially as a part-time worker. Consideration also needed to be given to how to use an active style of leadership to build team loyalty and motivation, working through recognising and using team members’ strengths.

4.3. Reflections on 'Balancing Life, Work and the Doctorate'

In reflecting on the results of the 360° feedback process and the appraisal process, the author considered what had changed in life over that time period. The nature of the EP work undertaken had obviously changed, with the gaining

of a management role and the resulting reduction in patchwork. There had also been changes at home, with the birth of a son and issues relating to childcare. Thirdly, the author had engaged with the Doctorate programme at UCL. The contribution of these three elements will now be considered.

4.3.1 Role-juggling and part-time working

The author considered some of the research in the areas of Role-juggling and part-time working in looking at how childcare and the birth of a son might have affected her EP practice. Initially in terms of how satisfied the author felt within her role, the situation had been considered in terms of part-time working, yet Thorsteinson's (2003) meta-analysis of research comparing the job attitude of full-time and part-time workers found little difference on job satisfaction, organisational commitment or intentions to leave between the two groups. It was surmised that part-timers compared themselves with other part-timers and full timers with full timers in raising conclusions in these areas and hence similar levels of job satisfaction were found. The only significant difference that was found was in the job involvement factor where part-timers were less involved than full-timers.

In considering research around role-juggling, paid employment is hypothesised to have conflicting results for mothers with young children. On the one hand, it is hypothesised to lead to increased self-esteem, efficacy perceptions, status and life satisfaction (Verbrugge, 1983), whilst resulting in role conflict, stress, life dissatisfaction and family tension (Kandel, Davies and Raveis, 1985). Emmons, Biernat, Tiedje, Lang and Wortman, (1990) looked at the amount of responsibility which women hold and found that women continue to carry out a disproportionate share of household and childcare responsibilities even when working. The stress of managing these multiple roles is seen to be greatest when work and family responsibilities are both high in terms of commitment. Williams, Suls, Alliger, Learner and Wan (1991) consider role conflict in terms of intra-role conflict (stress within one role, e.g., different demands within work, wanting to put the Hoover around when the baby needs attention) with inter-role conflict where one role impinges directly on the other, for example, having to leave work to pick up an unwell child. Williams et al (1991) discuss how women tend to process work and family roles simultaneously, juggling work and family demands throughout the day, rather than separating duties into separate

phases. The stress being created through role juggling is in terms of interruptions to goal-orientated behaviour leading to anxiety and negative affect (Mandler, 1984). Kirmeyer (1988) carried out a study of police dispatch officers and found that work interruption, rather than volume of work, was the critical factor in causing job stress and strain.

Certainly in considering the author's position when the second 360° feedback questionnaires were completed, it was clear to the author that intra-role conflict occurred, juggling the demands of schools, management responsibilities and specialist developments. Concurrently, inter-role conflict occurred with the demands of a young family impinging on work demands and vice versa. If the Doctorate was considered as a third role, conflicting with both work and home, the author's memories of this time as being stressful and difficult were probably accurate. This could quite well have had an effect on the author's commitment and ability to perform in schools work, as compared to how she had been able to perform before either of the latter two factors were present in her life. However, it should once again be recalled that the ratings on these items within the 360° questionnaires were all positive.

4.3.2 The effect of the Doctorate programme on practice

In considering the impact of the Doctorate in Educational Psychology on the author's EP practice, it is suggested that it would be useful to consider the course objectives and to consider development in relation to these three objectives.

At the time of starting the course (January 2000), the course objectives were as follows. To enable participants to:

1. Design and conduct high quality applied research which brings psychology to bear on service problems or issues.
2. Apply cutting-edge psychological theory and research to professional practice within service contexts
3. Reflect on personal beliefs, attitudes and styles of communication and interaction which may be assets in, or blocks to, effective problem management.

In considering objective number 1. in reflecting on development over the course of the Doctorate, the author feels that this is the area where the Doctorate has had the most impact for this individual. In completing the research component of the course, the author chose to work with a group of vulnerable young people who were difficult to engage. The approach chosen was initially quantitative as this was the author's background, and the area of the research topic chosen to investigate was likely to be problematic from the start being relatively atheoretical and with no clear conceptual model against which clear hypotheses could be tested. The author learned a great deal from the experience of completing this research. Examples of learning experiences included: designing and implementing a questionnaire survey, learning about interviewing techniques and the procedural issues of carrying out interviews with vulnerable young people, including issues of confidentiality, the dangers of entering therapeutic encounters when these had not been set up and how to really support these young people through the process. The author learned about qualitative research paradigms and about rationales for such research, coming to the view at the end of the thesis, that the chosen research design and conceptual analysis of the research was not the most effective that could have been chosen. Finally, a course in statistics was completed and a computer package was mastered, enabling the author to feel more confident in analysing any quantitative data.

The research project also allowed for the opportunity to work with other EP colleagues within different LEA's sharing the experience of engaging in research and benefiting from the support of research supervisors, learning to improve in the acceptance of critical feedback and being able to frame it positively, address the issues raised and recognise that the final product was improved. The author now feels more confident in being able to read research, to reflect critically on the nature of that research and to engage in further research herself, without the level of support accessed whilst on the course.

Objective number 2. was to apply cutting-edge psychological theory and research to professional practice within service contexts. The course did enable the participants to attend days on 'cutting edge topics' and to reflect on practice. Through the completion of professional development assignments, there was also the opportunity for an in-depth study of a particular area. Where the author wrote up work already completed, for example, project work, it could be difficult

to then relate this back to a literature review, which should have been carried out before the work was initiated. In these cases, learning was rather post hoc. However, where an assignment was chosen and an in-depth literature review was written, the author did feel that this gave an opportunity for immersion in a particular area. The assignments also provided the opportunity to gradually improve the author's writing skills, from the first assignment which took several re-drafts and competed re-writings, to the final assignment which could be produced far more quickly, without the need for the same levels of editing. Again, this was partly down to the author's confidence in her own writing skills.

Objective number 3 was to reflect on personal beliefs, attitudes and styles of communication and interaction which may be assets in, or blocks to, effective problem management. Both this final assignment and the thesis allowed opportunities for reflection around psychological beliefs and attitudes. The thesis in particular has lead me to question my own identity as a psychologist and to consider future avenues for development. The author feels that her work previously has been very much that of an *Educational Psychologist* and considers now the need to explore more clinical skills and implications for our work.

In considering then, how the Doctorate has impacted on the author's practice as an EP, it could be summarised that it has contributed little to everyday practice in schools and with children. However, the changes in attitudes and the expansion of the knowledge base must surely influence the approach taken to practice, for example, the need for a clear evidence-base for practice and the confidence to critique others' work, questioning how things will make a difference for a particular child. The issue may be that the 360° feedback process and appraisal within an LEA do not tap or measure the subtle changes in personal beliefs and attitudes which shape an EP's practice. It has required completion of the thesis with critiquing of the author's own research and then in-depth reflection to enunciate the differences that the Doctorate has made for this author.

4.4 Evaluating 360° feedback as development tool, compared to Appraisal

Considering some of the issues identified with appraisal and performance management, both in this assignment and by the studies of Thompson and Wills

(1994) and Imich et al (1992), 360° feedback as it was implemented originally in this authority and through UCL, has some strengths but some areas of difficulty.

360° did provide information from self and chosen others which could be reflected upon within an interview with a trusted person. This included information from customers - in this case teachers in schools and staff in social services with whom the author was working. The validity of the information gathered was still surrounded by issues, for example, did the people rating have a true picture of the skills which they were judging and was feedback influenced by other factors such as general feelings around the EP service or personal grudges.

The lack of a clear system for action planning and target-setting after the results of the 360° feedback had been analysed, meant that the information was not used to reflect on performance and for professional development as well as it could have been. The items to be rated could have allowed precise targets to be set and a means of evaluating progress could have been discussed and agreed, either for the purposes of personal development with a peer or through the more formal process of appraisal. The 360° tool, as developed within this authority and with UCL, does cover core competencies and skills as taken from job descriptions, the BPS Core curriculum for EP training and from research and therefore gives ratings of skills and competencies which are valuable to the role of the EP. It should therefore have offered scope for relevant and purposeful target-setting which could have tied in with the reflection on competencies covered within the authority's performance management review.

However, in terms of the value added by the Doctorate programme, the 360° process was not the appropriate tool for measuring progress. As discussed above, the areas which the author felt she had developed, were not explicitly assessed by the 360° feedback tool or the appraisal system. Whether this suggests that the skills gained are not those used within the current EP or senior EP roles within our service is a question which should be asked. It does suggest that consideration could be given to the amount of research, publication writing and analysis that is available within the current EP role.

The 360° process offers a different and higher level of information than Appraisal, for critical reflection on personal development which could be used for

target-setting and for planning development. It could be used to fit into the current system for performance management where EPs could bring it to the review meeting as an additional piece of evidence about their practice, or as a basis for target-setting for professional development.

5. Concluding comments

In conclusion, the 360° feedback suggests that there have been changes in the author's work as an EP over the course of the Doctorate although these are not necessarily in a positive direction. Possible reasons for this are discussed in terms of the process and in terms of the pressures experienced. Whether changes identified can ever be separated and related to the Doctorate programme rather than to maturation as an EP or to the influence of changes in everyday life and the work context, is unclear. It may be that the 360° feedback process would need to incorporate items which are more research-focused as well as being focused on the generic or management role of the EP to look at the impact of the Doctorate per se in more depth.

As a means of collecting information for reflection in a personal interview or individually for development, 360 ° feedback does add value to this process as compared to the system of performance management alone. It allows for a more detailed focus on individual skills rather than purely on service priorities and the gaining of content knowledge. However, there are issues about the implementation of the system arising from the research which need to be taken into account when services consider the use of the system. Whether 360° could most effectively be used alongside other means of gaining information about an appraisee for performance management, (for example observation or joint work) and within a structured system for personal supervision has not been considered in this assignment.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

Table A: Items to be celebrated and fixed using the 360° generic EP questionnaire, 1999 compared to 2003

| Date | | Strengths | Improvement Suggestions |
|------------|----------------|---|---|
| Dec 1999 | Self | Effective working relationships Listens well and responds appropriately Gives notice for change of date / time Follows through on commitments Treats people with respect | Practice based on theory and research Time to discuss how solutions might work Aware of impact of behaviour on others Understand context within which others work Explain how needs identified will be addressed |
| | Others | Treats people with respect Checks parental consent Clear re confidentiality Shows commitment to equal opportunities Responds sensitively to the needs of others | Adapts behaviour to help others feel comfortable Aware of impact of behaviour on others Works with individuals and groups to identify practical ways of addressing concerns Help people make links between factors contributing to process Understands theory of assessment and intervention frameworks |
| April 2003 | Self | Develops effective working relationships Is prepared – brings along correct information, file etc. Provides a summary of agreed actions at the end of each planning session Follows through on commitments Adapts his / her behaviour to help others feel comfortable | Is easy to understand Is innovative and creative Checks out that others have understood what she means. Deals with difficult situations calmly and constructively. Practice is based on appropriate knowledge and theory |
| | Others schools | Always checks that there is parental consent before she will discuss or work with individual children Is clear about what elements of work are confidential Follows through on commitments Treats people with respect Show commitment to equal opportunities | Knows own strengths and limitations. Explains how she will address needs identified. Demonstrates good understanding of how to improve learning and development Works with individual and groups to identify practical ways of addressing their concerns Works with people to identify possible solutions to their concerns |

APPENDIX 2

"Feedback from staff in social services using the generic questionnaire".

I will reflect briefly on the feedback received from staff in social services in November 2000. I will only consider this in terms of the similarities and differences between ratings between staff in schools / EPS and other services working in a different way (both myself and them) and working within a different context. The social services staff – social workers and managers at different levels within the organisation, were the most positive of all raters. Please see Appendix, Table 3 for the individual items identified by self and others to be celebrated and fixed.

Table B: Mean performance scores on each of the sections of the 360° questionnaire rated by self and staff in social services (others) in November 2000.

| | Interpersonal and communication skills | Professional Knowledge and Practice | Work Organisation and Management | Ethics and Equal Opportunities |
|--------|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Self | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.9 | 4.0 |
| Others | 5.1 | 5.2 | 5.2 | 5.5 |

Staff in social services rated all four areas as between 5 “very well” and 6 “exceptionally well”.

There are some similarities between the areas to be celebrated identified by school staff and staff in social services (“follows through on commitments”) and to be fixed (“explains how needs identified will be addressed”). The inclusion of the item about the range of SEN and support was I felt perhaps related to the function of a specialist EP working alongside other staff with a different range of knowledge. It appears that perhaps I am better at making myself easy to understand for staff from a different background than for those in schools.

Table C: Areas identified by self and by staff in social services (others) to be celebrated and fixed in November 2000 using the 360° generic EP questionnaire.

| | Areas to be celebrated | Areas to be fixed |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Self | <p>Effective working relationships</p> <p>Follows through on commitments</p> <p>Takes others views into account before acting</p> <p>Adapts behaviour to help others feel comfortable</p> <p>Aware of impact of behaviour on others</p> | <p>Demonstrates good understanding of learning and development</p> <p>Innovative and creative</p> <p>Takes time to discuss how any solution will work within a practical context</p> <p>Provides a summary of agreed actions at the end of a planning session</p> <p>Checks parental consent</p> |
| Others [staff in social services] | <p>Good knowledge of range and organisations of SEN support</p> <p>Honest and open in communication</p> <p>Understands theories of assessment and intervention</p> <p>Follows through on commitments</p> <p>Easy to understand</p> | <p>Does not jump to conclusions or make assumptions</p> <p>Takes time to discuss how a solutions will work within a particular context</p> <p>Takes others views into account before acting</p> <p>Explains how needs identified will be addressed</p> <p>Checks have understood what has been said</p> |

APPENDIX 3

Table D: Management areas identified by self and by EP colleagues to be celebrated and fixed in April 2003

| | Areas to be celebrated | Areas to be fixed |
|--------|--|---|
| Self | <p>Fosters an atmosphere of mutual support</p> <p>Responds sensitively to issues from outside work that affect a team member</p> <p>Adopts an empowering and enabling approach to difficulties</p> <p>Is service orientated, responsive to requests from others and is available and approachable on a routine basis</p> <p>Provides a clear rationale for decisions</p> | <p>Seeks feedback about her management practice</p> <p>Uses an active leadership style to build team loyalty and motivation</p> <p>Offers practical support if a team member is under pressure</p> <p>Provides constructive feedback to colleagues</p> <p>Values and motivates colleagues</p> |
| Others | <p>Fosters an atmosphere of mutual support</p> <p>Provides a clear rationale for decisions</p> <p>Acknowledges other people's professional view</p> <p>Values and motivates colleagues</p> <p>Provides a good model for professional practice and integrity</p> | <p>Communicates EPS vision, aims and objectives</p> <p>Recognises and uses team members' strengths</p> <p>Keeps the team informed about developments relating to their work within the LEA, e.g. funding issues</p> <p>Ensures members of staff are aware of rules and procedures</p> <p>Uses an active leadership style to build team loyalty and motivation</p> |